



Australian voters’ views since the voice referendum: main report

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Australian voters' views since the voice referendum

Executive Summary

2023 was a tumultuous year.

In May 2022 Labor had been elected on a progressive agenda which featured action on climate change and support for Aboriginal aspirations. These included a community leaders' plan for a separate Indigenous voice both to Parliament and the Executive to be incorporated into the Australian Constitution after a referendum. Labor had also assured voters that it was the party most committed to dealing with cost-of-living pressures.

Leading commentators thought Labor's electoral supremacy would be sustained, since it was built on a growing constituency of young people and university graduates. As well as these, there was Labor's support for many minorities who wanted to enlarge their autonomy relative to the wider community. Also, it was thought that the new leader of the Coalition, border-warrior Peter Dutton, had a reputation for taking a tough line on welfare benefits. Thus he had little chance of reversing voters' preferences.

The loss of the voice referendum in October 2023 challenged these assumptions. So too did the rise in right-wing populist parties in Europe and the US, parties which rejected much of the progressive agenda. In their case immigration invariably featured as a trigger while, as far as Australia was concerned, immigration hardly figured in the 2022 election.

In order to explore how these issues were playing out in Australia, we decided to complete another Tapri national survey in December 2023. The survey was designed to assess voters' support for Labor's progressive agenda, including the huge influx of migrants that materialised after Labor took office. The survey also assesses the degree to which voters suffered from financial insecurity and housing stress, and what influence, if any, these factors were having on voters' views and voting intentions.

We framed the survey around attitudes to three dimensions of the progressive agenda: its views on cultural change, national identity, and economic self-sufficiency, including Labor's stated willingness to redistribute income towards the less well-off.

As regards the voice, some commentators have argued that its loss was more about Australia's cost-of-living problems than any rejection of the progressive agenda. Our results shows that this was not the case. The dominant factor for No voters (Table 1) was that it challenged voters' priority that 'we are one country'.

As for immigration, concerns about illegal border crossings were not an issue in 2022 because of bipartisan support for strong border controls. Nevertheless, by

December 2023, a large segment of voters wanted drastic cuts to immigration levels (Table 21). Some 49 percent took this stance, which was well up on the 42 percent share who felt this way in our September 2022 survey.

Most voters do not share the progressive view that more people are vital for Australia's prospects. As Table 22 shows, a decisive 71 percent said that Australia does not need more people.

A core finding was that most voters' positions on cultural values, national identity and economic self-reliance are contrary to those of the progressive agenda.

The term 'progressive' has a number of meanings. We divide these into three categories:

Cultural, including support for diversity and minority desires to enhance their autonomy relative to an emphasis on national identity and loyalty;

Second, national and international openness, a preference to keep borders open for goods and people relative to promoting Australian production and jobs, free from foreign competition;

Third, economic redistribution with support for the less well-off.

The survey found that many voters had reservations about cultural and internationalist progressive values, but that there was some enthusiasm for the economic aspects, especially among those on low incomes and those suffering from housing stress.

Contrary to some who believe that Australians have become cosmopolitans with a dilute sense of national identity, fifty-eight percent of voters said that they had a feeling of belonging to Australia to 'a great extent'. Most voters also want Australia to be a country that makes things and that relies on its own people to provide the manpower and skills.

Research in the US shows that many ethnic minorities used to support aspects of the progressive agenda, especially those aspects bearing on autonomy for their own ethnic group. This led them to the Democratic Party. Now, however, sections of them are developing other priorities and are moving to the Republican Party. Might something similar be happening here?

In a major new finding our results show that European migrants, people who had in the past been drawn to Labor because of its advocacy for ethnic minorities, were decamping. They, like the Hispanics in the US, have been integrating into the mainstream Australian community and, in the process, have moved away from some of their former positions on the progressive agenda. The level of first- and second-generation European born voters on declared 'belongness' to Australia, was similar to that first and second generation Australian-born voters. They voted in similar ways as well. (Table 16, and Table A4)

On the other hand, as far as economic policies are concerned, most voters support Labor's commitment to redistribution. This is particularly so amongst the extraordinarily high share of Australian voters experiencing financial and housing insecurity.

In Australia the main political beneficiaries from the cost-of-living and housing crises are the parties on the left, particularly the Greens. The Greens' popularity has surged ahead through its strenuous advocacy for Government intervention to deal with financial insecurity and the housing crisis.

The right in Australia, on the other hand, has made little progress to date. This is probably because, apart from taking the lead on more traditional cultural values, the right has not offered policy alternatives that could appeal to those experiencing financial insecurity. It has also offered little to the majority of voters who want to see Australia's national identity enhanced, and to the many who want action to achieve a more self-reliant Australia, including a contraction in immigration.

Main report

This is the sixth national survey of Australian voters designed and commissioned by Tapri. It was a survey of 3001 voters fielded during December 2023.

As with previous surveys we were interested in voters' views on population questions, especially those concerning the level of immigration. However, this survey was broader in scope.

It was designed to explore Australian voters' reactions to issues such as cultural change, national identity, and economic redistribution, all issues prominent in Europe and the US. In these countries governments led by progressives had recently come under stronger pressure from right-leaning parties.

One focus of our questions was on whether the failure of the October 2023 voice referendum in Australia presaged a surge in support for the right. The referendum had been designed to give Indigenous Australians a permanent voice to parliament and the executive, enshrined in the Constitution. Would its failure, together with a deepening cost-of-living and housing crisis, benefit parties that leaned more to the right?

By 'progressive' we mean parties and governments that endorse small-l cultural values such as on diversity, minority autonomy and individual self realisation. The word also applies to those who favour a cosmopolitan, internationalist approach over national loyalty and national self-reliance. As far as economics is concerned, progressives tend to support redistributive taxes and welfare rights over dependence on market forces. But despite this, they also favour free trade and open borders (including generous immigration and refugee policies).

In Australia the Labor Party has been the proud banner-carrier for this progressive agenda. It inherited the role from the Hawke/Keating era. This saw the flowering of multiculturalism and women's rights. A feature of that era had been the way in which the Hawke/Keating governments married neoliberal globalist policies with a commitment to a social wage (including Medicare and compulsory superannuation). This redistributed some of the benefits of prosperity to the less affluent.

The right-leaning parties that have challenged aspects of a similar agenda overseas (including Le Pen's National Rally in France and the Republican Party in the US as transformed by Trump) exhibit the opposite end of the spectrum on each of the three dimensions. This is strongly the case on the cultural and national dimensions but patchier on the economic. Nevertheless, parties of the right, especially in Europe, have now tended towards welfare support for the losers in the globalisation process (groups who make up much of their constituency).

Immigration has been a trigger for the right-wing mobilisation of voters overseas, in part because of the evident failure of governing parties to stop

illegal border crossing. It has not played the same role in Australia in recent years because here there has been effective bipartisan political support to stop such crossing.

However, this is not the only concern that voters in Europe and the US have had about immigration. The type case is Denmark. There, voters saw a direct link between high immigration and threats to the social wage. As we detail later, the Danish People's Party drew strong electoral support by claiming that a high intake of migrants would overwhelm the system's capacity to provide its hitherto generous social wage. The mainstream Danish social democrat and conservative parties then had to endorse a strong policy of immigration control in order to compete with the People's Party.

By the time of the Australian Labor Party's May 2022 election victory it seemed that the three-fold progressive agenda was dominant in Australia. As we have documented elsewhere, leading analysts argued that Labor could look forward to prolonged electoral supremacy. The party could rely on a solid core of support from young people, professionals, and cultural and ethnic minority groups. Most graduates are also strong supporters.¹ Since they dominate most mainstream media and educational circles this tends to ensure that any criticism of the agenda will not get much air space.

On the other hand, the Coalition seemed to be dependent on a waning constituency of older voters such that, according to Paul Kelly, its very continued political viability was in doubt.²

There was some evidence of a similar situation in the US following the Democratic party's successes in the 1990s and early 2000s. These wins were built in part on a surge in the minority population, particularly Hispanics, people who were overwhelmingly Democrat voters. Judis and Tuxeira's book *The Emerging Democratic Majority* gave influential voice to this view.³ This confidence has since been challenged by evidence of the fraying of minority support for the Democratic party.

There is one other important issue that needs some preliminary introduction before we explore our survey results.

At the time of the May 2022 federal election cost-of-living issues, though prominent, were not seen as fundamental to the political contest. They are now, and with good reason. This is because these issues have intensified with the subsequent escalation of interest rates and compelling evidence that wages have lagged and are likely to continue to lag behind increases in the cost-of-living. In addition there is a housing crisis, which threatens to make home ownership for most young households an impossible dream.

We had anticipated that disquiet about these issues might swamp voters' concerns about other aspects of Labor's progressive agenda. The survey was designed to explore this possibility. The paradox is that, though Labor is partly

responsible for the housing crisis, because it allowed such a huge influx of migrants since May 2022, it may actually be the political beneficiary of the crisis. This is because it has been much more vocal in commitments to mitigate cost-of-living pressures than has the Coalition. But Labor is having to deal with competition from the Greens, who have been even more forthcoming in promising to deal with cost-of-living and housing issues. The results of this competition are explored later.

The voice referendum and its implications

As of early 2022 it seemed that most voters in Australia favoured the progressive agenda in most, if not all, of its aspects. This helps explain why the new Labor Government was prepared to support holding the voice referendum. In addition, Labor's position was endorsed by most cultural, media, educational and business elites – all of whom were more or less explicit supporters of the thrust of the progressive agenda.

The voice referendum failed with, with just over 60 percent of the electorate voting No. Furthermore, the Coalition emerged as a leader in pressing for a No vote. This was then read by some commentators as a fundamental challenge to the progressive agenda. With the concurrent surge in support for right-leaning parties in Europe and the US, some Australian progressives feared that the ground-work had been laid for a similar surge in Australia.

By December 2023 surveys, including Tapri's, showed that Labor's vote was falling, perhaps implying that this was the beginning of a right-wing trend here. At that time there had also been much discussion about the very high levels of immigration in Australia since Labor's win in 2022

In our survey voters were asked what their motives had been in supporting or opposing the voice referendum. Did these reflect opposition deriving from a rejection of progressive values, or were they, as some commentators argued, primarily a consequence of worries about the cost-of-living and related problems?

Indeed, some influential commentators thought the strong No vote was due more to voters' preoccupation with the cost-of-living than any concerns about the progressive agenda.

Simon Benson, *The Australian's* interpreter of the paper's Newspoll, says this was the case. He argued that voters' anxiety about increases in the cost-of-living translated into objections to Labor's focus on the voice. This focus implied that the Government was neglecting action on the cost-of-living.⁴ Kos Samaras, the high-profile principal of the polling firm Redbridge, shared this view. But he added that the decline in support for the voice his polling identified in mortgage-belt areas also reflected resentment of the elites so prominently supporting the Yes cause. This, he concluded, was generating a 'politics of grievance'.⁵

We tested this hypothesis by asking No voters which of the following factors was the most important reason for their vote. Table 1 lists the options offered to No voters, and their responses.

Table 1: Most important reason for voting No (No voters only) %

	%
<i>We are one country, and no legal or political body should be defined only on the basis of race or ethnicity.</i>	53
<i>I don't think the idea of First Peoples makes any sense. We are all Australians. The country belongs to all of us.</i>	18
<i>There are other things such as the cost-of-living that are more in need of fixing in Australia.</i>	14
<i>I voted No because the party I usually vote for in Federal elections was backing No.</i>	5
<i>The Uluru Statement from the Heart indicated that this constitutional change was just the beginning. There would be treaties, truth telling, and costly reparations to be paid.</i>	5
<i>I didn't understand what this referendum was about.</i>	4
<i>The people backing No are the people whose values were closest to mine.</i>	1
<i>Voting No is what the friends and family who are closest to me are doing.</i>	1
<i>Total %</i>	100
<i>Total N</i>	1565

Note: Respondents were asked to number their reasons for voting No from 1 (most important) to 2 (second most important) and 3 (important, but less important). Table 1 presents the results for the most important reason (1) only. For voters' reasons for voting Yes see Appendix A, Table A1.

The cost-of-living hypothesis was not supported. By far the most significant reason for voting No, which 53 percent of No voters endorsed, was the proposition that 'We are one country' The second most significant reason was: 'I don't think the idea of First Peoples makes any sense. We are all Australians. The country belongs to all of us' (18 percent). Thus, 71 percent of No voters were motivated by beliefs about national unity. By contrast, the proposition that 'There are other things such as the cost-of-living that are more in need of fixing in Australia' was endorsed by just 14 percent.

This finding is significant. It indicates that these No voters prioritised national solidarity over Indigenous leaders' aspirations for autonomy. The leaders were seen as seeking an enduring recognition as a group apart from all other Australians.

The rejection of the proposed voice has wider political implications. These stem from the vigorous support which Labor and other progressive leaders gave to the aspiration.

Table 2 shows that many of those who voted Labor in May 2022 voted No, the stance taken by the Coalition led by Peter Dutton. Could this imply a switch to sustained support for the Coalition?

Table 2: Vote in the October 2023 referendum by vote in the May 2022 Federal election %

<i>Vote in the May 2022 Federal election</i>	<i>I voted Yes</i>	<i>I voted No</i>	<i>I can't remember how I voted</i>	<i>Total %</i>	<i>Total N</i>
<i>Labor Party</i>	53	45	2	100	1130
<i>The Greens</i>	74	26	0	100	278
<i>National Party</i>	26	71	4	100	82
<i>Country Liberal</i>	50	50	0	100	2
<i>Liberal National Party</i>	15	83	2	100	167
<i>Liberal Party</i>	26	72	2	100	649
<i>Total Coalition</i>	24	74	2	100	900
<i>Pauline Hanson's One Nation</i>	10	88	2	100	122
<i>United Australia Party</i>	24	72	3	100	29
<i>Centre Alliance</i>	76	24	0	100	25
<i>Jacqui Lambie Network</i>	61	35	4	100	23
<i>Katter's Australia Party</i>	47	53	0	100	17
<i>Other party</i>	31	69	0	100	26
<i>One of the Teal independents</i>	56	41	3	100	32
<i>A different independent</i>	41	54	5	100	76
<i>Other</i>	40	50	10	100	10
<i>Can't remember re the election</i>	26	56	18	100	205
<i>Didn't vote in the 2022 election, but did in the referendum</i>	50	41	9	100	34
<i>All voters in the referendum</i>	42	55	3	100	2902

Note: Table 2 excludes the 99 voters who did not vote in the referendum.

Table 2 shows that 45 percent of people who voted Labor in 2022 voted 'No' in the referendum. Not all Coalition voters followed their leader's party line either, but only 24 percent of them deviated from it.

We explore later the degree to which these voters, for both Labor and the Coalition, sustained this shift when asked about their intended vote in the next election. Obviously, by December 2023, many other factors besides the voice referendum could have shaped their intended vote, some of which we now explore.

The No vote is only one indicator of a possible drift from Labor. We explore whether there has been any wider rejection of the progressive agenda and if so what political implications, if any, there might be.

Voters' attitudes to the progressive agenda: cultural values

The referendum showed that many voters prioritised national solidarity over constitutional representations of minority aspirations. We asked several other questions which explored voters' views about these aspirations.

Most voters have had enough of cultivating diversity. We start with ethnic diversity.

Table 3: 'Some people argue we should increase immigration in order to increase our ethnic and other forms of diversity. What is your view?' %

	%
<i>Yes, more diversity will give Australia a more vibrant society and economy</i>	23
<i>No, We have enough diversity</i>	37
<i>No, We need to encourage national unity and a shared Australian identity</i>	30
<i>Total no</i>	67
<i>Don't know</i>	11
<i>Total %</i>	100
<i>Total N</i>	3001

This is also the case with gender identity claims – which the Labor Government has directly or implicitly endorsed.⁶

Table 4: 'Some people argue that a woman is anyone who identifies as a woman, regardless of their sex when born. What do you think?' %

	%
<i>Strongly agree</i>	9
<i>Agree</i>	17
<i>Strongly agree and agree</i>	26
<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	21
<i>Disagree</i>	21
<i>Strongly disagree</i>	32
<i>Disagree and strongly disagree</i>	53
<i>Total %</i>	100
<i>Total N</i>	3001

Table 5: 'A number of people who were born male now identify as female. Do you think they should be allowed to compete in women's sport?' %

	%
<i>Yes</i>	13
<i>No</i>	72
<i>Don't know</i>	14
<i>Total %</i>	100
<i>Total N</i>	3001

But are these results uniform when we look at the respective questions by level of education? Graduates, though a minority of Australian voters (around 35 per cent) are often thought to be strong supporters of the progressive agenda and thus influential agents for change. We explored whether this was the case as far as attitudes towards diversity and gender fluidity are concerned. We start with diversity.

Table 6: ‘Some people argue we should increase immigration in order to increase our ethnic and other forms of diversity. What is your view?’ By education, grouped%

<i>.. increase immigration for more diversity?</i>	<i>University student</i>	<i>Graduate</i>	<i>Non-graduate</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Yes, more diversity will give Australia a more vibrant society and economy</i>	35	35	16	23
<i>No, We have enough diversity</i>	29	33	39	37
<i>No, We need to encourage national unity and a shared Australian identity</i>	22	22	33	30
<i>Total no</i>	49	55	71	67
<i>Don't know</i>	14	9	12	11
<i>Total %</i>	100	100	100	100
<i>Total N</i>	159	816	2026	3001

Table 6 shows that university students and graduates are more than twice as likely as non-graduates to want more immigration in order to create more diversity. It is the case that a plurality among students, and majorities in the other two groups, prefer to stay with current levels of diversity and, in many cases, focus on a shared sense of identity. Nonetheless enthusiasm for greater diversity is concentrated among the university educated.

Table 7: ‘Some people argue that a woman is anyone who identifies as a woman, regardless of their sex when born. What do you think?’ By education, grouped %

<i>A woman is anyone who identifies as a woman...</i>	<i>University student</i>	<i>Graduate</i>	<i>Non-graduate</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Strongly agree</i>	13	11	8	9
<i>Agree</i>	31	22	14	17
<i>Strongly agree & agree</i>	44	33	22	26
<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	28	22	21	21
<i>Disagree</i>	16	19	22	21
<i>Strongly disagree</i>	13	26	35	32
<i>Disagree & strongly disagree</i>	28	45	57	52
<i>Total %</i>	100	100	100	100
<i>Total N</i>	158	817	2026	3001

Table 8: ‘Some people argue that a woman is anyone who identifies as a woman, regardless of their sex when born. What do you think?’ By age%

<i>A woman is anyone who identifies as a woman...</i>	<i>18-29</i>	<i>30-44</i>	<i>45-59</i>	<i>60-74</i>	<i>75 plus</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Strongly agree</i>	15	13	5	5	4	9
<i>Agree</i>	25	21	12	11	11	17
<i>Strongly agree and agree</i>	41	34	17	16	16	26
<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	20	20	23	24	20	21
<i>Disagree</i>	14	18	24	26	29	21
<i>Strongly disagree</i>	26	28	37	35	36	32
<i>Disagree & strongly disagree</i>	39	46	60	61	64	52
<i>Total %</i>	100	100	100	100	100	100
<i>Total N</i>	621	810	751	557	263	3001

Table 9: ‘A number of people who were born male now identify as female. Do you think they should be allowed to compete in women’s sport?’ By education grouped %

<i>Transwomen in women's sport</i>	<i>University student</i>	<i>Graduate</i>	<i>Non-graduate</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Yes</i>	27	15	12	13
<i>No</i>	58	67	75	72
<i>Don't know</i>	15	18	13	14
<i>Total %</i>	100	100	100	100
<i>Total N</i>	158	817	2026	3001

A similar pattern emerges in Tables 7 and 8 and 9. In Tables 7 and 8 university students and young people in general are keener on gender self-identification than are graduates, and both groups are considerably more supportive than are non-graduates, voters with other qualifications or none. Table 9 shows that there is opposition to transwomen competing in women’s sport across the board, though to a lower extent among university students.

While overall most voters do not support the above changes, young people, university students and graduates are generally much more supportive than are the rest of the sample.

In order to summarise voters’ attitudes on these cultural concerns we have developed a composite index which categorises voters as conservatives, moderates or progressives. Table 10 shows that graduate voters are far more likely to be in the progressive category on cultural values than are non-graduate voters. And Table 11 shows that something similar is true of young voters.

Table 10: Conservative and progressive cultural values by highest qualification %

	<i>Conser- vatives</i>	<i>Moder- ates</i>	<i>Progres- sives</i>	<i>Total %</i>	<i>Total N</i>
<i>University student</i>	29	21	50	100	159
<i>Graduate</i>	41	16	43	100	817
<i>Student at a TAFE or other vocational college</i>	44	24	32	100	222
<i>Vocational college diploma</i>	63	18	19	100	567
<i>Other vocational diploma</i>	65	20	15	100	140
<i>Trade qualification</i>	68	14	17	100	266
<i>No post-school qualification</i>	67	14	19	100	831
<i>Total</i>	55	17	28	100	3001

Note: The Conservative-progressive scale was developed from two questions on Indigenous affairs, two on the transgender question, and one on ethnic diversity. See details in the methods section. Table A5 is an expanded version which separates out the strong conservatives and the strong progressives.

This pattern is not unique to Australia and, given that media elites and many politicians are university people, it has often led societies to take up progressive positions on cultural themes that affront large sections of the electorate, especially older people and non-graduates. A number of studies have concluded that this has prompted many of these voters to desert progressive parties and cross over to the conservative side, a pattern that has also been discerned in Australia.⁷

Table 11: Conservative and progressive cultural values by age group %

	<i>Conservative</i>	<i>Moderate</i>	<i>Progressive</i>	<i>Total %</i>	<i>Total N</i>
<i>18-29</i>	37	21	43	100	620
<i>30-44</i>	42	22	37	100	810
<i>45-59</i>	65	13	21	100	750
<i>60-74</i>	71	13	17	100	557
<i>75 plus</i>	81	10	10	100	263
<i>Total</i>	55	17	28	100	3001

Table 11 shows that on the scale of progressive cultural values voters aged 18-29 are indeed more progressive than their elders and a lot less likely to have conservative values. While there would be a high degree of overlap with the university students, the 18-29 year old group is much larger, and of course includes many voters who are not connected with the university system.

As we have documented in previous surveys the cross-over effect, where non-graduates tend to be more culturally conservative and more likely to vote conservative, while many graduates move in the opposition direction, has been evident in Australia.⁸ Whether it will continue to be the case is explored later in the light of voter attitudes to other issues, especially the cost-of-living crisis.

National solidarity

In this section we start with national identity and then, later, explore another aspect of solidarity: national self-sufficiency. The hypothesis is that voters with a strong sense of national identity will also favour self-sufficiency. We have already seen that there is wide support for the priority of the nation over sectional interests in the analysis of the voice referendum vote.

Debate about Australia Day provides another telling indication of this sentiment. The day has long been celebrated on the 26th of January to commemorate the arrival of the First Fleet in 1788 and thus the historical beginnings of modern Australia. Some argue that the date should be changed. They focus on feelings of dispossession among some, or many, Indigenous people. (Overall 33 percent of non-Indigenous voters in the Tapri survey strongly supported or supported changing the date as opposed to 53 percent of those who identified as Indigenous – see Table A2.)

The question of Australia Day has come to symbolise a divide over whether national solidarity should prevail over sectional interests.

Overall, 49 per cent of voters opposed changing the date, with most of the support for maintaining it coming from non-graduates. As Table 12 shows, just 27 per cent of non-graduates wanted a change in the date, compared with 47 per cent of graduates and 53 percent of university students.

Table 12: ‘Would you support or oppose changing the date on which Australia Day is celebrated?’ By education, grouped %

	<i>University student</i>	<i>Graduate</i>	<i>Non-graduate</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Strongly support</i>	23	22	12	16
<i>Support</i>	30	25	15	18
<i>Total support</i>	53	47	27	34
<i>Oppose</i>	18	15	19	18
<i>Strongly oppose</i>	7	21	38	32
<i>Total oppose</i>	25	36	57	49
<i>No opinion</i>	22	17	16	17
<i>Total %</i>	100	100	100	100
<i>Total N</i>	159	817	2026	3001

Note: The question read: ‘Australia Day is celebrated annually on the 26th of January. This is the anniversary of the 1788 arrival of the First Fleet of British ships at Sydney Cove, New South Wales. Some people say that this date can be offensive to Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders and that we should change it. Would you support or oppose changing the date on which Australia Day is celebrated?’

Table 13 shows that there is a striking political division on the issue. Very few Coalition voters (or One Nation voters) want to change the date, relative to Labor and, especially, Greens voters.

Table 13 ‘Would you support or oppose changing the date on which Australia Day is celebrated?’ By intended vote in December 2023 %

	<i>Coalition</i>	<i>One Nation</i>	<i>Labor</i>	<i>Greens</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Strongly support</i>	9	4	17	39	9	16
<i>Support</i>	15	7	24	20	15	18
<i>Total support</i>	24	10	41	58	24	34
<i>Oppose</i>	21	13	19	10	17	18
<i>Strongly oppose</i>	46	68	23	8	27	32
<i>Total oppose</i>	67	80	41	18	44	49
<i>No opinion</i>	10	10	18	23	32	17
<i>Total %</i>	100	100	100	100	100	100
<i>Total N</i>	1035	167	1020	431	349	3001

Tables 12 and 13 show that non-graduates are least enthusiastic about the change, and that those who are not keen on it are more likely to vote for the Coalition or One Nation.

However, our larger interest was to explore trends regarding feelings about Australia, and in particular, what they imply about political choice. We refer here to the overseas studies which suggest that, as minorities intergrate into the

larger national economy and society, their voting behavior converges with the mainstream which can mean a rather stronger interest in the more conservative parties.

This is a significant issue in Australia, given our huge intake of migrants over the past many decades. The trend in the past has been that those from non-English-speaking-backgrounds tended to identify with their own community of origin and to support the Labor Party. This is because of Labor’s strong advocacy for ethnic communities and multiculturalism.

But what happens as most of these migrants integrate into the wider community? Does the original link between nation-of-origin or ethnicity and any political preferences stemming from this endure?

We needed an indicator that would serve as a composite measure of integration, and found it in with the concept of belonging. This was measured by the question ‘To what extent do you have a sense of belonging to Australia?’ The presumption was that, if voters felt a strong sense of belonging to Australia, they would be less likely to preference their country-of-origin or ethnic identity and more likely to value the sense of being securely integrated.

This question allowed plenty of space for those who feel ambivalent about the question to express this. The results are in Table 12.

Table 14: ‘To what extent do you have a sense of belonging to Australia?’ %

	<i>Total</i>
<i>A great extent</i>	57
<i>A moderate extent</i>	33
<i>Only slightly</i>	8
<i>Not at all</i>	2
<i>Total %</i>	100
<i>Total N</i>	3001

Fifty-seven percent of voters said that they felt a feeling of belonging ‘to a great extent’. This alone is a significant finding. It indicates that a majority of voters are likely to support causes which advance overall Australian ends as well the political groups that lead in this direction.

But what about migrants? How have their views about national belongingness’ changed with time in Australia, and to what extent does this view affect their political preferences?

Table 15 sets out levels of national belonging by country-of-birth. As might be expected it shows that more recently arrivals from Asia or the Middle East are less likely to indicate a ‘great extent’ of belongingness to Australia than are those born in Australia, or in English-speaking-background (ESB) countries or in Europe. The latter group, which includes Western-, Southern- and Eastern-

Europe-born migrants, mostly arrived in Australia decades ago. In the past they have been the main supporters of ethnic community identities and multiculturalism.

No longer. Table 15 shows that European-born voters have just as strong a sense of belonging to Australia as do Australian-born voters.

Table 15: ‘To what extent do you have a sense of belonging to Australia?’ by country of birth %

	<i>Australia</i>	<i>ESB*</i>	<i>Europe</i>	<i>Asia</i>	<i>Middle East, Israel & Africa</i>	<i>Other, including don't know**</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>A great extent</i>	58	60	59	42	34	47	57
<i>A moderate extent</i>	32	30	29	50	49	47	33
<i>Only slightly</i>	8	9	13	7	11	6	8
<i>Not at all</i>	3	2	0	1	6	0	2
<i>Total %</i>	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<i>Total N</i>	2482	208	80	145	35	51	3001

Notes: *ESB stands for English-speaking-background countries

**Three respondents did not know their country of birth.

Table A4 in Appendix A shows sense of belonging by mother’s country of birth, demonstrating that these patterns hold good in the second-generation as well.

This result suggests Australia may be experiencing long-established migrants drifting towards the mainstream, just as has been occurring in the US, especially with Hispanics.

The theory of American commentators is that this outcome reflects upward mobility among ethnic minorities and a parallel embrace of mainstream views about values, national identity and even immigration.⁹ The Tapri survey suggests that a similar pattern is occurring in Australia in regard to European-born migrants. This observation is based not just on their sense of belonging but also on their political preferences, as indicated in their voting intentions as of December 2023. (See Table 18.)

A sense of belonging also varies by level of education and age.

Table 16: ‘To what extent do you have a sense of belonging to Australia?’ By level of education, grouped %

	<i>University student</i>	<i>Graduate</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>A great extent</i>	28	51	61	57
<i>A moderate extent</i>	53	37	29	33
<i>Only slightly</i>	16	10	7	8
<i>Not at all</i>	3	1	3	2
<i>Total %</i>	100	100	100	100
<i>Total N</i>	158	816	2025	3001

Table 16 shows that university students have a much lower sense of belonging that does the rest of the sample, and that non graduates have a stronger sent of belonging than graduates.

Table 17: ‘To what extent do you have a sense of belonging to Australia?’ By age group %

	<i>18-29</i>	<i>30-44</i>	<i>45-59</i>	<i>60-74</i>	<i>75 plus</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>A great extent</i>	32	52	57	77	84	56
<i>A moderate extent</i>	53	34	33	18	15	33
<i>Only slightly</i>	12	11	7	4	1	8
<i>Not at all</i>	3	3	3	1	0	2
<i>Total %</i>	100	100	100	100	100	100
<i>Total N</i>	621	810	750	558	264	3001

Some of the differences by level of education may be explained by age. Table 17 shows that younger voters have a much lower sense of belonging than do older voters. But that offers no explanation of why the difference between older and younger voters in identification with their native land should be so sharp. Perhaps some of the difference may stem from an emphasis on diversity in the education system, and some from the testing economic circumstances facing younger Australians, most especially difficulties in the housing market. These ideas are explored later.

Table 18: Intended vote in December 2023 by country of birth %

	<i>Australia</i>	<i>ESB*</i>	<i>Europe</i>	<i>Asia</i>	<i>Other, including Middle East, Israel, Africa & don't know**</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Labor</i>	34	31	30	50	29	34
<i>Greens</i>	15	11	8	10	20	14
<i>Labor and Greens</i>	49	42	38	60	48	48
<i>Coalition</i>	34	43	40	26	40	35
<i>One Nation</i>	6	5	10	0	1	6
<i>Coalition and One Nation</i>	40	48	50	26	41	40
<i>Other</i>	12	10	13	13	10	12
<i>Total %</i>	100	100	100	100	100	100
<i>Total N</i>	2482	207	80	144	87	3000

Notes: * ESB stands for English-speaking-background migrants.

** Three respondents didn't know their country of birth.

Table 18 shows that migrants born in Europe are rather less likely to vote for Labor or the Greens than are Australia-born voters, and rather more likely to vote for the Coalition or One Nation. By contrast voters born in Asia or the Middle East are more likely to vote for Labor or the Greens.

National self-sufficiency and immigration

As expected, given that most voters have a strong sense of national belonging, they also favour national self-sufficiency. Tables 19 and 20 show that there is strong support for national self-sufficiency as far as economic questions are concerned.

Table 19: 'The share of manufacturing in Australia's economy is less than half of what it was forty years ago. Do you think ...?'

<i>Responses:</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>We should protect Australia's manufacturing, using tariffs if necessary</i>	70
<i>We should get rid of all tariffs so that we can buy goods more cheaply from overseas</i>	14
<i>Don't know</i>	16
<i>Total %</i>	100
<i>Total N</i>	3001

Table 20 ‘Many employers argue that it’s hard to find workers and that temporary and permanent immigration should be encouraged to help fill job vacancies. Which of the following is closest to your views?’ %

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>They are right. We should let in as many migrant workers as employers want to employ</i>	24
<i>They are wrong. We should deal with worker shortages by raising wages and improving skills training for locals</i>	62
<i>Don't know</i>	14
<i>Total %</i>	100
<i>Total N</i>	3001

Those favouring national self-sufficiency on economic issues also hold an analogous view on immigration. In both Europe and the US the question of immigration has served as a key political trigger or mobilising issue. There, it is seen as a tangible sign of the elite’s open-border policies and an obvious reflection of their lax policies on border management. This laxity has allegedly allowed big inflows of undocumented immigrants, people with values (such as a commitment to radical Islam) and ethnic identities thought likely to challenge the mainstream.

The immigration question overseas is at the core of surging right-wing opposition to the progressive agenda. This can be seen in voters’ support for curbing the powers of the European Union in favour of greater national sovereignty. Marine Le Pen’s National Rally in France has flourished around this theme. The successful Brexit campaign in Britain was similar. Likewise, Trump’s ‘Make America Great Again’ movement has been built around hostility to free trade and support for the revival of protection for American industry. Control of immigration has been an emotional trigger point. Trump has achieved a takeover of the American Republican Party that, until a few years ago, was dominated by a centrist progressive agenda, one that involved borders open both to commerce and people. Trump has converted the Republican Party to the antithesis of this earlier agenda.

We have not seen any similar manifestation of such a movement in Australia since the brief flourishing of One Nation in the late 1990s. And such a manifestation is unlikely to resurface. This is because the fight over undocumented immigrants and border control was won here a decade or so ago and support for tight border control is now bipartisan policy.¹⁰

Also, Australia’s economy differs fundamentally from those of Europe and the US. Australian manufacturing industries (except those with internal market advantages such as with food processing) died two decades ago. Trade competition, particularly from China, means that there is little left of a rust belt in Australia. (This rust belt was evident in the early 2000s, as were concentrations of aggrieved former workers left behind.)

Meanwhile, Australian consumers have done well from the export successes of Australia's commodity industries. Because of this we have access to relatively cheap hi-tech consumer goods, including cars, without the Australian economy running into major balance of payments problems.

Australia has also experienced strong economic growth despite the loss of much of its manufacturing industry. This has been powered by the massive export growth in commodities.

This export growth has allowed a rapid growth in population and the people servicing and construction industries that this entails. These are industries which rely on the boost to demand driven by high population growth. On the plus side, Federal and State Governments have been able to depend on the increased income-tax revenue that such growth engenders. But this imported growth is not all upside. The states have to meet high infrastructure costs, and their metropolitan residents must endure decreased amenity, competition for public services, and unaffordable housing for those not yet in the property market.

Any public restiveness on immigration also has to be considered in the light of the strong elite consensus: from their perspective it is a positive for Australia and any criticism implies anti-migrant or even racist sentiments.

What does this all add up to. How strong are voters' views on immigration - fueled population growth?

By the time of the survey in December 2023, the huge surge in immigration since Labor took office in May 2022 was clearly evident. The Government did not anticipate the scale of the inflow. Nevertheless its leaders had made it clear that they thought that high immigration would help power the economy.

Temporary immigration to Australia is uncapped and most of the immigration surge was made up of temporaries, many of them international students. The Government claimed it was attracting highly skilled professionals, many of whom would be incorporated as permanent residents into Australia's workforce. The expansion of the overseas student industry was especially celebrated as a component in this strategy.

These policies represented the antithesis of the national self-reliance favoured by most Australian voters. However, as of December 2023, no major non-Labor party had made any effort to make immigration a political issue.

Despite this, by December 2023, there was an increase in the share of voters by who were strongly opposed to the outcomes flowing from Labor's immigration policies. This is set out in Table 21. We then go on to then explore the factors that might explain it.

Table 21: ‘Since Australia’s borders were re-opened after the pandemic, net migration (arrivals minus departures) has increased. In the year to May 2023 net migration reached 454,000. This is the highest number on record. What is your opinion about immigration?’

<i>Responses:</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>1 I want the high numbers to continue</i>	14
<i>2 We should return to net migration at somewhat lower levels</i>	24
<i>1&2 High or somewhat lower net migration</i>	38
<i>3 We should return to net migration at much lower levels</i>	24
<i>4 We should keep migration low enough so that new arrivals just balance out departures (nil net migration)</i>	25
<i>3&4 Much lower or nil net migration</i>	49
<i>5 Don't know</i>	13
<i>Total %</i>	100
<i>Total N</i>	3001

The question analysed in Table 21 gave voters two options that we count as supporting current policies: ‘I want the high numbers to continue’ and an endorsement of high migration, though at a ‘somewhat lower levels’. There were a further two options, support for which left no doubt that they represented a rejection of Labor’s policies. They were immigration at ‘much lower levels’, and nil net migration, that is a balance between arrivals and departures.

In December 2023 49 percent of voters chose one of the reject options, compared with the 38 percent who chose one of the support options. The reject level was significantly higher than that recorded in our September 2022 survey. At that time 42 percent of voters chose the reject options.

There has been a similar decline in support for adding to Australia’s population. The progressive agenda assumes the value of adding ever more people. Yet as Table 22 shows, a decisive 71 percent say that Australia does not need more people. By comparison, the same question in September 2022 yielded 65 percent who chose this option.

Table 22: overall, do you think Australia needs more people? %

	<i>%</i>
<i>Yes</i>	29
<i>No</i>	71
<i>Total %</i>	100
<i>Total N</i>	3001

There was a similar voter reluctance to support a strong refugee program which, again, has been an important component of the progressive agenda. As Table 23 shows, only 31 percent were supportive, another 32 percent had no opinion, while 38 percent were opposed.

Table 23: We should have a strong humanitarian policy and bring in more refugees %

	%
<i>Agree strongly</i>	8
<i>Agree</i>	22
<i>Agree strongly and agree</i>	31
<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	32
<i>Disagree</i>	21
<i>Disagree strongly</i>	17
<i>Disagree and disagree strongly</i>	38
<i>Total</i>	100
<i>Total</i>	3001

First, a brief comment on the 38 percent of voters who as of December 2023 endorsed Labor’s high migration policies (Table 21). Most of them shared the progressive agenda, in which migration is seen as part of Australia’s need to open up to the world.

This group included many young people and students. They supported a high immigration intake despite the fact (explored further below) that young people face severe difficulties in the housing and rental markets, markets in which migrants are obvious competitors (Table 24).

Table 24: Attitudes to immigration by education %

	<i>Uni student</i>	<i>Graduate</i>	<i>Vocational college student</i>	<i>Vocational diploma or trade qualification</i>	<i>No qualification since leaving school</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>1 I want the high numbers to continue</i>	21	18	12	12	11	14
<i>2 We should return to net migration at somewhat lower levels</i>	32	27	32	22	21	24
<i>1 & 2 High or somewhat lower migration</i>	53	46	44	33	32	38
<i>3 We should return to net migration at much lower levels</i>	16	23	20	25	27	24
<i>4 We should keep migration low enough so that new arrivals just balance out departures (nil net migration)</i>	15	20	18	30	28	25
<i>3 & 4, Much lower or nil net migration</i>	31	42	38	55	55	49
<i>5 Don't know</i>	16	12	18	12	13	13
<i>Total %</i>	100	100	100	100	100	100
<i>Total N</i>	159	816	222	971	832	3001

What about the plurality of voters opposed to Labor's policies? First of all, they were not attracted by the advantages immigration advocates often put forward in support of their cause. There was, at best, lukewarm support for these arguments. These including bringing in more migrants in order to help deal with demographic ageing and to boost the economy. See Tables 25 and 26.

Table 25: We need more migrants so that we can offset the ageing of the population %

	%
<i>Agree strongly</i>	6
<i>Agree</i>	23
<i>Agree strongly and agree</i>	29
<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	29
<i>Disagree</i>	28
<i>Disagree strongly</i>	14
<i>Disagree and disagree strongly</i>	42
<i>Total %</i>	100
<i>Total N</i>	3001

Table 26: We need more people to boost the economy %

	%
<i>Agree strongly</i>	7
<i>Agree</i>	26
<i>Agree strongly and agree</i>	33
<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	30
<i>Disagree</i>	25
<i>Disagree strongly</i>	12
<i>Disagree and disagree strongly</i>	37
<i>Total %</i>	100
<i>Total N</i>	3001

We provided a variety of possible factors that voters might consider as reasons for opposing high immigration. Those that attracted the strongest agreement had to do with the impact on housing prices, on urban quality of life and competition for services – particularly hospital services. On the other hand, voters were not especially worried about immigration driving down wages (Table 27).

Table 27: Adding more people drives down wage %

	%
<i>Agree strongly</i>	13
<i>Agree</i>	23
<i>Agree strongly and agree</i>	36
<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	38
<i>Disagree</i>	21
<i>Disagree strongly</i>	5
<i>Disagree and disagree strongly</i>	26
<i>Total %</i>	100
<i>Total N</i>	3001

The strongest negative was recorded about the cost of housing, where 71 percent of voters expressed concern (Table 28).

Table 28: Adding more people will push up the cost of housing %

<i>Responses</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Agree strongly</i>	34
<i>Agree</i>	37
<i>Agree strongly and agree</i>	71
<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	20
<i>Disagree</i>	7
<i>Disagree strongly</i>	2
<i>Disagree and disagree strongly</i>	9
<i>Total %</i>	100
<i>Total N</i>	3001

Table 29 shows strong concern about urban quality of life, especially regarding overcrowding and heavy traffic.

Table 29: We don't need more people because our cities are overcrowded and there is too much traffic already %

<i>Responses</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Agree strongly</i>	25
<i>Agree</i>	35
<i>Agree strongly and agree</i>	60
<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	23
<i>Disagree</i>	13
<i>Disagree strongly</i>	3
<i>Disagree and disagree strongly</i>	17
<i>Total</i>	100
<i>Total</i>	3001

Sixty-one percent of voters also recorded their concern about overcrowding in hospitals. See Table 30.

Table 30: We don't need more people because our hospitals are overcrowded

<i>Responses:</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Agree strongly</i>	27
<i>Agree</i>	34
<i>Agree strongly and agree</i>	61
<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	23
<i>Disagree</i>	13
<i>Disagree strongly</i>	3
<i>Disagree and disagree strongly</i>	16
<i>Total</i>	100
<i>Total</i>	3001

Since two thirds of Australian voters are home owners (either outright or with a mortgage),¹¹ their concerns about the impact of immigration on the cost of housing probably reflect an altruistic concern for other Australians. These include people who are having to deal with increasing housing costs (high prices for buyers and high rents for renters). Those burdened with crippling housing costs no doubt also include their own offspring.

Nevertheless, we would not expect these home owners to be highly motivated to respond politically, since they are simultaneously benefiting from the extra competition pushing up the price of their own houses.

Table 31: 'Adding more people will push up the cost of housing' by home ownership %

	<i>Homeowner outright</i>	<i>Homeowner with a mortgage</i>	<i>Not a homeowner</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Agree strongly</i>	32	31	38	34
<i>Agree</i>	37	42	34	37
<i>Agree strongly and agree</i>	69	72	72	71
<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	22	18	19	20
<i>Disagree</i>	8	8	6	7
<i>Disagree strongly</i>	1	2	3	2
<i>Disagree and disagree strongly</i>	9	10	8	9
<i>Total</i>	100	100	100	100
<i>Total</i>	1080	943	979	3001

Of course, in Table 31 some homeowners may agree that population growth pushes up the cost of housing but, in some circumstances, conclude that from their point of view this is a good thing.

Table 32 partially confirms this by showing that homeowners who also own investment property are less likely to say Australia does not need more people. Only 51 percent of them chose this option, as opposed to 75 percent of home

owners who did not own investment property. Around 20 percent of all Australians residents (citizens and non-citizens) aged 18 plus owned an investment property in 2023. In our sample of voters it is also close to 20 percent.¹²

Table 32: ‘Overall, do you think Australia needs more people?’ by Homeownership and ownership of investment property %

	<i>Homeowner with investment property</i>	<i>Non-homeowner with investment property</i>	<i>Homeowner without investment property</i>	<i>Non-homeowner without investment property</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Yes</i>	49	20	25	24	29
<i>No</i>	51	80	75	76	71
<i>Total %</i>	100	100	100	100	100
<i>Total N</i>	624	49	1399	930	3001

But despite possible internal conflict about housing costs, most home owners do have a stake in many of the issues related to immigration. This is seen most clearly where congestion and competition for services are concerned.

Table 33 shows that homeowners are just as concerned about population growth increasing urban congestion as are non-homeowners.

Table 33: ‘We don’t need more people because our cities are overcrowded and there is too much traffic already’ By home ownership %

	<i>Homeowner outright</i>	<i>Homeowner with a mortgage</i>	<i>Not a homeowner</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Agree strongly</i>	27	21	26	25
<i>Agree</i>	35	35	35	35
<i>Agree strongly and agree</i>	62	56	61	60
<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	21	26	23	23
<i>Disagree</i>	13	15	12	13
<i>Disagree strongly</i>	4	3	3	3
<i>Disagree and disagree strongly</i>	17	18	16	17
<i>Total</i>	100	100	100	100
<i>Total</i>	1080	943	978	3001

Before assessing the political implications of these findings, we need to examine voters’ views on the third dimension of the progressive agenda, that is, economic redistribution.

Redistribution

How large is the segment of voters affected by the cost-of-living crisis and what are their political preferences?

We based our assessment on voters' answers to the question 'How well are you getting on financially these days?' Table 34 shows that a remarkable 48 per cent of voters indicated that they were either 'just about getting by' or finding it quite difficult or very difficult.

Table 34: 'How well are you getting on financially these days?'

	%
<i>Living comfortably</i>	14
<i>Doing alright</i>	37
<i>Living comfortably or doing alright</i>	52
<i>Just about getting by</i>	28
<i>Finding it quite difficult</i>	13
<i>Finding it very difficult</i>	8
<i>Just about getting by or finding it quite, or very, difficult</i>	48
<i>Total</i>	100
<i>Total</i>	3001

As might be expected, voters' housing situation is closely connected to their sense of financial insecurity.

Table 35 explores this issue. We have included two panels one for those who own an investment property and one for those who do not.

Table 35: ‘How well are you getting on financially these days? By ownership of own home and investment property %

	<i>With investment property</i>			<i>Without investment property</i>			Total
	Home-owner outright	Home-owner with mortgage	Non home-owner	Home-owner outright	Home-owner with mortgage,	Non home-owner	
<i>Living comfortably</i>	31	12	14	20	8	9	14
<i>Doing alright</i>	40	37	39	44	38	30	37
<i>Living comfortably or doing alright</i>	71	49	53	65	46	39	52
<i>Just about getting by</i>	21	31	24	24	31	29	28
<i>Finding it quite difficult</i>	6	13	18	6	15	18	13
<i>Finding it very difficult</i>	1	7	4	5	7	14	8
<i>Just about getting by or finding it quite, or very, difficult</i>	29	51	47	35	54	61	48
<i>Total</i>	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<i>Total</i>	336	288	49	744	655	930	3001

Table 35 makes it clear that voters who own their home outright and also have investment property are, as one might expect, doing much better financially than are the rest of the sample. By contrast, the large group who do not own their own home and have no investment property (930 voters, or 31 percent of the sample) feel considerably worse off.

Those experiencing the uncertainties of finding affordable rental housing or of ever raising enough funds to ever buy a house, particularly young people, face a precarious outlook.

Table 36: ‘How well are you getting on financially these days?’ By living arrangements, voters aged 18 to 29 only %

<i>Voters 18-29 only</i>	<i>Home- owner outright</i>	<i>Home- owner with a mortgage</i>	<i>Living with parents</i>	<i>Renting</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Living comfortably</i>	20	17	10	10	14
<i>Doing alright</i>	51	37	38	33	40
<i>Living comfortably or doing alright</i>	72	54	48	43	54
<i>Just about getting by</i>	20	26	29	21	24
<i>Finding it quite difficult</i>	6	15	13	23	14
<i>Finding it very difficult</i>	3	5	11	13	8
<i>Just about getting by or finding it quite, or very, difficult</i>	28	46	52	57	46
<i>Total %</i>	100	100	100	100	100
<i>Total N</i>	158	149	151	156	614

Note: Seven respondents aged 18 to 29 who were not homeowners and were neither living with parents nor renting are excluded in Table 33.

Table 36 shows how young voters aged 18 to 29 feel about financial insecurity by their own living arrangements. It suggests that they are not doing any worse than the sample as a whole, though those who are renting are the worst off.

Table A3 shows all renters by age and perceived financial status. All are doing worse than the sample as a whole, but renters aged 18 to 29 are not, as a whole, doing quite as badly as are the older households. Possibly some young renters are still receiving help from their parents, or are more prepared to join shared households, or both.

The next step was to examine the impact of financial security on attitudes towards redistribution. Are those doing it tough more likely than the better-off to favour state intervention to help the losers? As Table 37 on attitudes to higher taxes and Table 38 on support for state intervention show, yes they are.

Table 37: ‘Labor and the Coalition have both at times stated that they support lower taxes ... What is your view?’ By ‘How are you getting on financially these days?’ %

<i>We should —</i>	<i>Living comfortably</i>	<i>Doing alright</i>	<i>Just about getting by</i>	<i>Finding it quite difficult</i>	<i>Finding it very difficult</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>...reduce taxes for both rich and poor</i>	30	22	22	15	20	22
<i>... stop reducing tax levels. The existing rates are appropriate</i>	21	17	16	16	14	17
<i>...increase tax rates for high income earners and big business</i>	41	49	51	59	56	50
<i>Don't know</i>	8	12	11	10	10	10
<i>Total %</i>	100	100	100	100	100	100
<i>Total N</i>	426	1123	832	380	239	3000

Table 37 demonstrates that people who say they are living comfortably are more likely to say that we should reduce taxes for both rich and poor. By contrast, those who are finding it quite, or very, difficult are more likely to say that we should increase taxes for high income earners and big business.

Table 38 shows that, when it comes to choosing between market forces and government support, personal financial circumstances make a strong difference. People who are living comfortably are 13 percentage points more likely to favour responding to market forces than are the sample as a whole, while those who are finding it quite, or very, difficult are eight or nine percentage points more likely than the sample as a whole to favour Government support.

Table 38: ‘Some economists argue that when economic times are tough Governments should respond by relying more on market forces...’ By ‘How are you getting on financially these days?’ %

	<i>Living comfort- ably</i>	<i>Doing alright</i>	<i>Just about getting by</i>	<i>Finding it quite difficult</i>	<i>Finding it very difficult</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Yes, people should be encouraged to respond to market incentives as well as market pressures if the economy is to improve</i>	47	39	31	21	22	34
<i>No, when times are tough Governments should try to help those left behind with income and job support</i>	33	39	45	51	50	42
<i>Don't know</i>	20	21	24	28	28	23
<i>Total</i>	100	100	100	100	100	100
<i>Total</i>	426	1124	832	380	239	3001

Given the seriousness of the cost-of-living and housing crises, we had anticipated that voters’ sense of financial security or insecurity would shape their voting choice. But if so, for which party? The Coalition went into this competition carrying some heavy baggage. It has championed the cause of lower taxes, with the Morrison Government’s legislation of lower taxes in 2018 being a recent highlight. This legislative package, famously, gave more tax relief to higher-income taxpayers than to middle- or lower-income taxpayers.

Meanwhile, since the 2022 election, the Labor Government had made much of its commitment to relieving voters’ cost-of-living difficulties and the Greens have proposed radical state intervention in the housing market to deal with the housing crisis.

Table 39 provides an indication of voting choice by financial situation as of December 2023.

Table 39: ‘If a federal election were held today (as of December 2023) which of the following would you vote for?’ By ‘How are you getting on financially these days?’ %

	<i>Living comfortably</i>	<i>Doing alright</i>	<i>Just about getting by</i>	<i>Finding it quite difficult</i>	<i>Finding it very difficult</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Labor</i>	37	35	34	29	29	34
<i>Greens</i>	10	14	14	17	23	14
<i>Labor and Greens</i>	47	49	48	46	52	48
<i>Coalition</i>	42	36	33	31	22	35
<i>One Nation</i>	3	5	6	7	9	6
<i>Coalition and One Nation</i>	45	41	39	38	32	40
<i>Other</i>	7	10	13	16	16	12
<i>Total</i>	100	100	100	100	100	100
<i>Total</i>	426	1122	832	379	238	3001

Table 39 shows that the financially insecure are much more likely to vote for Labor or the Greens than they are for the Coalition. In particular, those voters ‘finding it very difficult’ are strongly attracted to the Greens. The Labor and Greens vote combined puts these two parties well ahead of the Coalition and One Nation.

The overall political situation

In the aftermath of the voice referendum opinion polls began to show that Labor had lost ground to the Coalition and that the Coalition was in a position to make gains.¹³

According to our December 2023 survey there has been a significant decline in the Labor share of the primary vote since May 2022 and a significant increase in the Coalition share. See Table 40.

Table 40: Intended vote in December 2023 by actual vote in May 2022 %

<i>Intended vote in December 2023</i>	<i>Vote as remembered in the federal election in May 2022</i>						
	Coalition	Labor	Greens	One Nation	Other	Can't remember or didn't vote	Total
<i>Labor</i>	4	78	5	3	14	17	34
<i>Greens</i>	2	5	89	3	8	19	14
<i>Coalition</i>	90	10	5	10	26	15	34
<i>The three main parties</i>	96	92	98	16	49	51	83
<i>One Nation</i>	1	2	1	79	7	3	6
<i>Other</i>	2	5	1	5	44	46	12
<i>Total %</i>	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<i>Total N</i>	871	1133	302	128	266	302	3001

Table 40 compares respondents' intended vote in the next federal election (as of December 2023), with their actual vote, as remembered, in May 2022.

It suggests that, while the Coalition is likely to hold on to 90 percent of its May 2022 voters, Labor may lose as many as 22 percent – some to the Coalition and some to the Greens. Overall, people who voted for one of the three main parties (the Coalition, Labor, or the Greens) are likely to stay with one of these three, though former Labor voters are slightly less likely to do so.

Table 41: Vote in May 2022 as remembered, and intended vote in December 2023 %

	<i>Vote as remembered in May 2022</i>	<i>Intended vote in December 2023</i>
<i>Labor</i>	38	34
<i>Greens</i>	10	14
<i>Labor and Greens</i>	48	48
<i>Coalition</i>	29	34
<i>One Nation</i>	4	6
<i>Coalition plus and One Nation</i>	33	40
<i>Other</i>	9	12
<i>Can't remember or didn't vote in 2022</i>	10	NA
<i>Total %</i>	100	100
<i>Total N</i>	3001	3001

Table 41 however, shows that the voters' preference for parties endorsing the progressive agenda (Labor and the Greens) has not declined overall. The loss to Labor has been made up by advances by the Greens.

In this sense the Greens are outcompeting Labor, especially amongst the financially insecure (see Table 39), and among younger people (see Table 42 and 43).

Table 42: Vote in May 2022 as remembered, and intended vote in December 2023, voters aged 18 to 29 only %

	<i>Vote as remembered in May 2022</i>	<i>Intended vote in December 2023</i>
<i>Labor</i>	31	30
<i>Greens</i>	19	26
<i>Labor and Greens</i>	50	56
<i>Coalition</i>	19	27
<i>One Nation</i>	3	4
<i>Coalition and One Nation</i>	22	31
<i>Other</i>	11	12
<i>Can't remember or didn't vote</i>	18	NA
<i>Total</i>	100	100
<i>Total</i>	621	621

Table 43: Intended vote in December 2023 by age group %

	<i>18-29</i>	<i>30-44</i>	<i>45-59</i>	<i>60-74</i>	<i>75 plus</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Labor</i>	30	34	36	37	32	34
<i>Greens</i>	26	19	10	4	5	14
<i>Labor and Greens</i>	56	53	46	41	37	48
<i>Coalition</i>	27	30	34	43	51	35
<i>One Nation</i>	4	6	7	5	2	6
<i>Coalition and One Nation</i>	31	36	41	49	53	40
<i>UAP</i>	2	2	1	1	0	1
<i>Other</i>	10	9	12	10	10	10
<i>Total %</i>	100	100	100	100	100	100
<i>Total N</i>	621	810	750	557	262	3001

As we write (April 2024) it seems that the Labor Government has decided that to remain competitive it must do more to attract the financially insecure. It did so, in part, by announcing that it would repudiate its previous election promise to confirm the Morrison tax cuts, including those favouring higher income taxpayers and bestow the benefits on lower income earners.¹⁴ This was announced in late January 2024.¹⁵ It has done this in part to compete with the Greens, who were advocating far more strenuous redistribution of taxes. The

subsequent recovery in Labor/Greens voting intention in the polls by February 2024¹⁶ is consistent with our hypothesis about the political weight of the redistribution issue.

The stalling of the crossover trend

In the past many non-graduates voted Labor while graduates tended to prefer the Liberals. But over the past three decades or so there had been something of a crossover. In 1984, 60 percent of non-graduates voted Labor, while in 2019 only 45 percent voted Labor (or Greens) and 55 percent voted for the Coalition or other right-leaning minor parties. Back in 1966 only 24 percent of graduates voted Labor but, by 2019, 53 percent of them voted left (Labor or Greens).¹⁷ By 2019, a higher share of non-graduates supported the Coalition than supported Labor and the Greens. This was the crossover trend, but it appears now to have stalled.

As Table 44 shows some 46 per cent of non-graduates intended to vote for Labor or the Greens compared with 42 per cent who intended to vote for the Coalition or One Nation. At the same time graduates continue to support Labor and the Greens over the Coalition by a very large margin.

A clash of progressive cultural values, as exemplified by the voice referendum, may have swung non-graduates to the Coalition but, by December 2023, this trend had dissipated.

Table 44: Intended vote in December 2023 by education, grouped %

	<i>% Non-graduates voting Coalition or One Nation</i>	<i>% University students voting Coalition or One Nation</i>	<i>% Graduates voting Coalition or One Nation</i>	<i>% Non-graduates voting Labor or Greens</i>	<i>% University students voting Labor or Greens</i>	<i>% Graduates voting Labor or Greens</i>
<i>December 2023, intended vote</i>	42	40	36	46	54	54

Note: There were 2026 non-graduates in the sample, 158 university students and 817 graduates.

From a comparative perspective this change in the non-graduate vote, if maintained up until the 2025 election, would make Australia an outlier. It is widely acknowledged by comparative political scientists that voters' concerns about the effects of globalisation can generate political responses from either

the right or the left. The outcome depends on whether political parties on the right or the left seek to mobilise such voters.

The right has usually prevailed because right-leaning parties can readily make use of nationalistic appeals. They are well placed to reach out to voters who can see that globalisation is linked to job losses due to offshoring or import competition. These parties are not inhibited in using immigration as a trigger since they usually favour national solidarity. Left-leaning parties find it hard to compete on this terrain. This is because their progressive values make it illegitimate for them to seem to blame migrants for voters' economic distress or to prize national homogeneity.

The consequence is that, across Europe, right-wing parties have dominated in mobilising voters' concerns about globalisation. While these parties have historically favoured anti-socialist policies, this inclination has become much less apparent in recent years. Some have even gravitated to strongly redistributive policies which includes high taxes to finance a generous welfare state. This is the case with the Danish People's Party.

The Danish People's Party (DDP)

Most readers will be familiar with the National Front (now National Rally) experience in France. Here Marine Le Pen has led the Party away from the from the anti-tax, anti-government interventionist policies of her father, Jean-Marie Le Pen. National Rally has moved left in a successful pursuit of a working-class constituency wanting more government protection.

Another case, with greater relevance to Australia, is that of the Danish People's Party (DDP). It also originated as an ethnocentric anti-tax movement. However, under new leadership in the 2000s, it tacked left in pursuit of working-class voters by following an anti-immigration policy. This was accompanied by a strong endorsement of Denmark's generous welfare policies. These, it claimed, were being threatened by an influx of migrants, especially refugees, because of their welfare claims. This was claimed to be a continuing problem because these migrants did not, allegedly, share the Danish people's sense of responsibility for maintaining Denmark's welfare system.

During the 2000s the DDP's share of the vote reached around 20 per cent. Its support was crucial to the established conservative party's radical tightening of immigration policy during these years. This resulted in the toughest migration policy settings anywhere in the developed world.

These policies were opposed by progressive elites in Denmark, including leaders of the mainstream Social Democratic Party (SDP). However, after the 2000s, when the SDP returned to power it retained these same immigration policies. It had little choice because not doing so would have threatened losses

within its working-class electoral base. The Social Democratic Government currently in power in Denmark is now pursuing tough repatriation policies rather than integration measures towards the relatively few refugees who have made it into Denmark.

Despite the resulting low population growth, and the maintenance of a high-taxing cradle-to-grave welfare state, Denmark is among the most highly productive and internationally competitive advanced economies. It has achieved this at the same time as pursuing a free trade strategy. This includes membership of the European Community. The Danish Government has done this while at the same time strictly managing migration movements.

One distinctive contribution to this outcome is the Danish policy of Flexicurity. Flexicurity contributes to the continuous economic change (or structural adjustment) required to sustain its competitive position. Displaced workers do not go on to welfare payments but instead are required to undergo the training relevant to the needs of competitive firms. The state pays for the training and regular wage payments during the transition period.¹⁸

This policy is the antithesis of those being pursued in Australia. Here targeted training assistance for displaced workers is minimal. Instead, our practice has been to rely on an education system that is largely free to make its own judgements as to the skills it delivers while government depends on overseas migrants to fill the gaps employers are facing.

Since Labor came to power in May 2022 it has turbocharged this policy. It has done this by prioritising overseas students trained in STEM disciplines by giving them access to permanent residence visas in its new skilled migration system. The Migration Strategy announced in December 2023 affirms this commitment.¹⁹

Conclusion

The contrast between Australia and Denmark is dramatic. As we have shown, it is the left, especially the Greens, who have made the running on government redistributive initiatives. In the process, they have captured an increasing share of the vote. The Greens avoid the immigration issue.²⁰ They are attracting a sizeable slice of the financially insecure (Table 39) despite many of these voters being simultaneously opposed to the Greens' progressive value agenda and to their support for immigration (often tacit, occasionally overt). The Greens have been able to attract disadvantaged voters because there is no effective political competition in this space.

That is not to say that the Labor Party is unaware of the potential political competition it will face from the Greens on these issues.

This was illustrated with the release of the Labor Government's new Migration Strategy at the end of December 2023. Much of the current surge in immigration has been due to an influx of international students. However various announcements since that time indicate that a significant tightening in issuing overseas student visas is underway.

According to the Labor Government this policy will result in a contraction in net overseas migration from 510,000 in 2022-23 to 375,000 in 2023-24 and 250,000 in 2024-25.²¹ This will still leave Australia with the highest rate of net overseas migration in the developed world.

The Labor Government is well aware of the political sensitivities of the financially insecure. A striking indication of this was its announcement in late January 2024 that it would cut taxes for middle- and lower-income taxpayers, at the expense of higher-income taxpayers. They did this well knowing that they were breaking an election promise.

The Coalition has a long record of advocating lower tax rates, including for the rich, most recently with the Morrison Government's legislation of such cuts in 2018. Thus it is currently not competitive on this issue.

The questions of cost-of-living and housing affordability are likely to be with us for years. Even if inflation continues to decline, thus taking the edge off the cost-of-living crisis, it is certain that the housing crisis will get worse.

This is because housing construction continues to fall behind the growth in household numbers. As we have argued elsewhere, the key reason is that the policy pursued by the Federal Labor Government and by the State Labor Governments of building 'up not out', that is, concentrating housing growth in established inner and middle suburbs, is not working and is unlikely to work.²² This is because of the high site- and build-costs for new dwellings in these suburbs.

An alternative strategy is needed and, so far, the Greens have made the running. They propose that the Federal Government should act as a developer, and invest enormous sums in building affordable housing. This policy will not work either, because it too does not deal with the high site- and build-costs of inner- and middle-city housing construction.

In addition, the Greens insist that there is no need to deal with the demand side of the housing crisis. They claim their build policy will also provide for a continued high intake of migrants.

In our view, any solution of the housing crisis will have to involve two core policies. The first is that on the supply side. A big increase in the supply of affordable housing is only possible if it occurs on the fringes of Australia's metropolises, because that is where there is plenty of land suitable for relatively inexpensive detached housing. The second policy response must include

curbing the migrant influx because it is such an important component in the growth of demand for housing.²³

At present, there is no political party willing to fill this policy space. The Coalition's past policies prioritise allocating subsidies to aspiring home owners and allowing them greater access to their superannuation balances to meet the cost of housing. These policies just add to housing demand and fuel a further escalation in the price of housing.

There is a legitimate role for governments as developers, as the Greens propose. The State governments filled this role in the 1950s and 1960s using funds allocated to them by the Menzies Coalition government. The Menzies government also ensured that low-cost finance via restrictions on interest rates was available for private building. This was operationalised via the Savings Banks and Building Societies. However, these interest rate restrictions were swept away with the Hawke/Keating Government's deregulation of banking and finance.

The Menzies era covered the glory years of Australian housing construction, when, in 1966, the share of Australian households owning their own home reached 71 per cent. It is well below that level now, especially in Sydney, where it was 63 per cent at the time of the 2021 Census.

Our analysis of voters' motivations indicates that most voters would support such a role for Government, especially those in the growing ranks of the financially insecure and, of course, the ranks of those younger households that will never be able to afford to buy a house. Our results on the extent of voters' feelings of belongingness to Australia, and the implied willingness to act on behalf of fellow Australians, suggest that most voters would support such action.

Appendix A

Table A1: Most important reason for voting Yes (Yes voters only) %

<i>Responses</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>I voted Yes because I was concerned about what the rest of the world would think of us if we voted No.</i>	16
<i>I voted Yes because the party I usually vote for in Federal elections was backing Yes.</i>	9
<i>The amendment is an opportunity to create positive change for disadvantaged Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders.</i>	52
<i>Voting Yes will help heal the nation and move on from the divisions of the past.</i>	12
<i>The people backing Yes were those whose values were closest to mine.</i>	4
<i>Voting Yes means Australia can apologise and begin to make up for its colonial past.</i>	5
<i>Voting Yes is what the friends and family who are closest to me are doing.</i>	2
<i>Total %</i>	100
<i>Total N</i>	1243

Note: Respondents were asked to number their reasons for voting Yes in the October 2023 referendum on an Indigenous voice to Parliament and Government, from 1 (most important) to 2 (second most important) and 3 (important, but less important). Table A1 presents the results for the most important reason (1) for voting Yes only.

Table A2: Would you support or oppose changing the date on which Australia Day is celebrated? By Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin?

	<i>No, not of Indigenous origin</i>	<i>Yes, Aboriginal</i>	<i>Yes, Torres Strait Islander</i>	<i>Yes, both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander</i>	<i>All Indigenous</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Strongly support</i>	15	33	55	63	40	16
<i>Support</i>	18	17	0	0	13	18
<i>Strongly support and support</i>	33	50	55	63	53	34
<i>Oppose</i>	17	23	27	16	23	18
<i>Strongly oppose</i>	32	18	9	11	16	32
<i>Oppose and strongly oppose</i>	50	41	36	26	38	49
<i>No opinion</i>	17	9	9	11	9	17
<i>Total</i>	100	100	100	100	100	100
<i>Total</i>	2883	90	11	19	120	3001

Table A3: ‘How well are you getting on financially these days?’ By age group, renters only %

	<i>18-29</i>	<i>30-49</i>	<i>50 plus</i>	<i>Total renters</i>	<i>Total sample</i>
<i>Living comfortably</i>	10	7	9	8	14
<i>Doing alright</i>	33	30	24	29	37
<i>Living comfortably or doing alright</i>	43	37	33	37	52
<i>Just about getting by</i>	21	33	31	30	28
<i>Finding it quite difficult</i>	23	18	20	20	13
<i>Finding it very difficult</i>	13	12	16	14	8
<i>Just about getting by or finding it quite or very difficult</i>	57	63	67	63	48
<i>Total %</i>	100	100	100	100	100
<i>Total N</i>	156	302	282	740	3001

Table A4: ‘To what extent do you have a sense of belonging to Australia?’ By mother’s country of birth, Australian-born only %

	<i>Australia</i>	<i>ESB</i>	<i>Europe</i>	<i>Asia</i>	<i>Other & don't know*</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>A great extent</i>	59	55	59	37	53	58
<i>A moderate extent</i>	31	37	34	44	35	32
<i>Only slightly</i>	8	5	5	19	12	8
<i>Not at all</i>	3	3	2	0	0	3
<i>Total %</i>	100	100	100	100	100	100
<i>Total N</i>	2023	157	168	81	49	2478

Note: *Four respondents did not know their mother’s country of birth.

Table A5: Strong and moderate conservative and progressive cultural values by highest qualification %

	<i>Strong Conservative</i>	<i>Moderate, leaning Conservative</i>	<i>Moderate</i>	<i>Moderate, leaning Progressive</i>	<i>Strong Progressive</i>	<i>Total %</i>	<i>Total N</i>
<i>University student</i>	14	14	21	19	31	100	159
<i>Graduate</i>	23	18	16	20	23	100	817
<i>Student at a TAFE or other vocational college</i>	20	24	24	14	18	100	222
<i>Vocational college diploma</i>	38	25	18	8	11	100	567
<i>Other vocational diploma</i>	37	28	20	9	6	100	140
<i>Trade qualification</i>	48	20	14	8	10	100	266
<i>No pos-school qualification</i>	40	26	14	10	10	100	831
<i>Total</i>	33	23	17	13	15	100	3001

Table A6: ‘To what extent do you have a sense of belonging to Australia?’ By ‘How did you vote (in the referendum)?’

	<i>I voted Yes</i>	<i>I voted No</i>	<i>I can't remember how I voted</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>A great extent</i>	52	62	52	57
<i>A moderate extent</i>	38	29	29	33
<i>Only slightly</i>	9	7	11	8
<i>Not at all</i>	2	2	9	2
<i>Total %</i>	100	100	100	100
<i>Total N</i>	1243	1565	94	2902

Note: This question was preceded by ‘On the 14th of October this year Australians were asked to vote in a referendum. The [referendum] question read as follows: “A proposed law: to alter the constitution to recognise the First Peoples of Australia by establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice. Do you approve of this proposed alteration?”’ Respondents were then asked: ‘Did you vote in the referendum? Or did something come up so you didn’t vote?’ Those who said they voted were then asked how they voted. Ninety-nine respondents who had not voted in the referendum are excluded from Table A6

Methods

The survey ran from 4 December 2023 to 20 December 2023. Questions were chosen, and the analysis was done, by Tapri. Andrew Elturk, field agent, collected data from a random national sample of 3001 people drawn from PureProfile's panel source of over 450,000. The survey was restricted to voters. Quotas were set with a 10 per cent 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, taken as a \$1 payment, or donated to charity). The survey took them approximately ten minutes to complete.

Some of the responses in questions 4 and 5 (Table A1 and Table 1) were borrowed from James Kangasooriam, 'Bi_Focal #9: Australia & the Voice referendum: The noes have it', focaldata, 11 October 2023.

The progressive-moderate-conservative variable

This was created in the following way:

Questions for the initial score of the Progressive variable (P) (1 to 12)

And the Conservative variable (C) (1 to 12)

Q 27 How do you feel about acknowledgment of country statements?

- 1 I'm happy to accept them as polite behaviour ... Score 2 for P
- 2 These ceremonies don't bother me. No score
- 3 I do not like these ceremonies because Australia is my home too. Score 2 for C

Q32 born male now identify as female. should they be allowed to compete in women's sports?

- 1 Yes Score 2 for P
- 2 No Score 2 for C
- 3 Don't know No score

Q33 a woman is anyone who identifies as a woman... What do you think?

- 1 Strongly agree Score 2 for P
- 2 Agree Score 1 for P
- 3 Neither agree nor disagree No score
- 4 Disagree Score 1 for C
- 5 Strongly disagree Score 2 for C

Q35 Would you support or oppose changing the date on which Australia Day is celebrated?

- 1 Strongly support Score 2 for P
- 2 Support Score 1 for P
- 3 Oppose Score 1 for C
- 4 Strongly oppose Score 2 for C
- 5 No opinion No score

Q36 Some people argue we should increase immigration in order to increase our ethnic and other forms of diversity.

What is your view?

- 1 Yes, more diversity will give Australia a more vibrant society and economy. Score 4 for P
- 2 No. We have enough diversity. No score

- 3 No. We need to encourage national unity and a shared Australian identity. []Score 4 for C
 4 Don't know []No score

Thus each variable was scored out of 12.
 For ease of analysis these were then grouped into:

		Progressives	Conservatives
0	<i>System missing (n=34)</i>	<i>System missing</i>	<i>System missing</i>
1-3	1	Low Progressive	Low Conservative
4-6	2	Moderate Progressive	Moderate Conservative
7-9	3	Higher Progressive	Higher Conservative
10-12	4	Highest Progressive	Highest Conservative

The two variables were then cross tabulated with those with no score (n=34, ie *system missing*) later added in to the moderates. This enabled the creation of a new variable which incorporated both the Conservative values and the Progressive values into the one variable ranging from firmest Conservative through moderates to firmest progressive.

The questionnaire

[Questions on age, sex, and location were asked by the panel providers, plus a screening question on being enrolled to vote]

In most cases, to answer the questions please click the appropriate box. But in some cases you will be asked to provide a number, such as ranking an answer from: 1 most important, to 2 second most important, to 3 important, but less important.

1 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 that we can buy goods more cheaply from overseas.
- 3 Don't know

2 On the 14th of October this year Australians were asked to vote in a referendum. The question read as follows: 'A proposed law: to alter the constitution to recognise the First Peoples of Australia by establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice. Do you approve of this proposed alteration?'

- 1 Did you vote in the referendum? I voted
- 2 Or did something come up so you didn't vote? I didn't vote [Go to Q 6]

3 (Only for those who chose 1 in Q2, ie 'I voted')

How did you vote?

- 1 I voted Yes [Go to Q 4]
- 2 I voted No [Go to Q 5]
- 3 I can't remember how I voted [Go to Q 6]

4 (For those who voted Yes: response 1 in Q3. Then go to Q6.)

Reasons for voting Yes. Please pick the three reasons that were most important to you, Numbering them from 1 (most important), 2 (second most important), 3 (important, but less important).

- 1 I voted Yes because I was concerned about what the rest of the world would think of us if we voted No.
- 2 I voted Yes because the party I usually vote for in Federal elections was backing Yes.
- 3 The amendment is an opportunity to create positive change for disadvantaged Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders.
- 4 Voting Yes will help heal the nation and move on from the divisions of the past.
- 5 The people backing Yes were those whose values were closest to mine.
- 6 Voting Yes means Australia can apologise and begin to make up for its colonial past.
- 7 Voting Yes is what the friends and family who are closest to me are doing.

5 (For those who voted No: response 2 in Q3.)

Reasons for voting No. Please pick the three reasons that were most important to you, numbering them from 1 (most important), 2 (second most important), 3 (important, but less important).

- 1 We are one country, and no legal or political body should be defined only on the basis of race or ethnicity.
- 2 I voted No because the party I usually vote for in Federal elections was backing No.
- 3 I don't think the idea of First Peoples makes any sense. We are all Australians. The country belongs to all of us.
- 4 I didn't understand what this referendum was about.
- 5 The people backing No are the people whose values were closest to mine.
- 6 The Uluru Statement from the Heart indicated that this constitutional change was just the beginning. There would be treaties and truth telling, and costly reparations to be paid.
- 7 Voting No is what the friends and family who are closest to me are doing.
- 8 There are other things such as the cost of living that are more in need of fixing in Australia.

6 In the Federal election for the House of Representatives in May 2022 which party did you put first?

- 1 Centre Alliance
- 2 Country Liberal (NT)
- 3 Jacqui Lambie Network
- 4 Katter's Australia Party
- 5 Labor Party
- 6 Liberal National Party (Qld)
- 7 Liberal Party
- 8 National Party
- 9 Pauline Hanson's One Nation
- 10 The Greens
- 11 United Australia Party
- 12 Other party
- 13 One of the 'teal' independents
- 14 A different independent
- 15 Other
- 16 Can't remember
- 17 Didn't vote

7 Since Australia's borders were re-opened after the pandemic, net migration (arrivals minus departures) has increased.

In the year to May 2023 net migration reached 454,000. This is the highest number on record. What is your opinion about immigration?

- 1 I want the high numbers to continue
- 2 We should return to net migration at somewhat lower levels.
- 3 We should return to net migration at much lower levels.
- 4 We should keep migration low enough so that new arrivals just balance out departures.
- 5 Don't know

8 Many employers argue that it's hard to find workers and that temporary and permanent immigration should be encouraged to help fill job vacancies.

Which of the following is closest to your views?

- 1 They are right. We should let in as many migrant workers as employers want to employ.
- 2 They are wrong. We should deal with worker shortages by raising wages and improving skills training for locals.
- 3 Don't know.

9 Overall, do you think Australia needs more people?

- 1 Yes
2 No

The next section has questions on the costs and benefits of population growth. What is your opinion?

10 We need more people to help defend Australia

- 1 agree strongly 2 agree 3 neither agree
nor disagree 4 disagree 5 disagree strongly

11 We need more migrants so that we can offset the ageing of the population.

- 1 agree strongly 2 agree 3 neither agree
nor disagree 4 disagree 5 disagree strongly

12 We should have a strong humanitarian policy and bring in more refugees.

- 1 agree strongly 2 agree 3 neither agree
nor disagree 4 disagree 5 disagree strongly

13 We need more people to boost the economy.

- 1 agree strongly 2 agree 3 neither agree
nor disagree 4 disagree 5 disagree strongly

14 Australia's population can grow without causing serious environmental damage.

- 1 agree strongly 2 agree 3 neither agree
nor disagree 4 disagree 5 disagree strongly

15 We don't need more people because our cities are overcrowded and there is too much traffic already.

- 1 agree strongly 2 agree 3 neither agree
nor disagree 4 disagree 5 disagree strongly

16 We don't need more people because our hospitals are overcrowded.

- 1 agree strongly 2 agree 3 neither agree
nor disagree 4 disagree 5 disagree strongly

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

- 1 agree strongly 2 agree 3 neither agree
nor disagree 4 disagree 5 disagree strongly

18 Adding more people will drive down wages.

- 1 agree strongly 2 agree 3 neither agree
nor disagree 4 disagree 5 disagree strongly

19 Adding more people will push up the cost of housing.

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"/>

20 Adding more people will make it harder for Australians to reduce our 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"/>

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

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

22 This is:

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

In the lead up to the referendum on an Indigenous voice there was much talk about Indigenous people having a special connection to the land and of Australia being their homeland. How important to you is the idea of Australia being your home?

23 The idea of one country being my home does not really concern me. I think of myself as a citizen of the world.

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"/>

24 I have more than one possible national home. I, or many of my family, were born overseas so thinking of Australia as home is not very important for me.

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"/>

25 Though I, or many of my family, were born overseas, thinking of Australia as home is important to me.

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 Just as it is for Indigenous people, Australia is my special home too.

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"/>

27 At events where there are talks or speeches people often begin with either an acknowledgment of country (or a welcome to country by an Indigenous person). This happens on many occasions, including those on television.

An acknowledgment of country usually runs something like this:

'I acknowledge the Kulin nation, the traditional owners of the land on which we stand, and their elders past, present and emerging.'

How do you feel about acknowledgment of country statements?

- 1 I'm happy to accept them as polite behaviour acknowledging Indigenous community ancestry in Australia
- 2 These ceremonies don't bother me.
- 3 I do not like these ceremonies because Australia is my home too.

28 Some economists argue that when economic times are tough Governments should respond by relying more on market forces. They say this is important if we are to boost economic growth and productivity. What is your view?

- 1 Yes, people should be encouraged to respond to market incentives as well as market pressures if the economy is to improve.
- 2 No, when times are tough Governments should try to help those left behind with income and job support.
- 3 Don't know.

29 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 United Australia Party
- 9 Other

And now a few questions on some different topics

30 Are you worried about climate change?

- 1 Yes, very worried
- 2 Yes, slightly worried
- 3 Not at all worried
- 4 No opinion

31 Some people say that if we are to reduce carbon emissions, we can't rely on renewable energy alone (solar power and wind power) for generating electricity.

They think we should also invest in nuclear power. What do you think?

- 1 We should take the idea of investing in nuclear power seriously.
- 2 Nuclear power is not safe. Australia should rule it out and continue to invest in renewable energy.
- 3 Renewables are unreliable, and nuclear power is unsafe. We should keep coal-fired power stations going for as long as possible.
- 4 Don't know.

32 A number of people who were born male now identify as female. Do you think they should be allowed to compete in women's sports?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Don't know

33 Some people argue that a woman is anyone who identifies as a woman, regardless of their sex when born. What do you think?

- 1 Strongly agree
- 2 Agree
- 3 Neither agree nor disagree
- 4 Disagree
- 5 Strongly disagree

34 Labor and the Coalition have both at times stated that they support lower taxes for individuals and for businesses.

Some people say this would boost economic growth.

Others say we should increase taxes for the rich and big business. This would reduce inequality and help pay for better services.

What is your view?

- 1 We should reduce taxes for both rich and poor.
- 2 We should stop reducing tax levels. The existing rates are appropriate.
- 3 We should increase tax rates for high income earners and big business.
- 4 Don't know.

35 Australia Day is celebrated annually on the 26th of January. This is the anniversary of the 1788 arrival of the First Fleet of British ships at Sydney Cove, New South Wales.

Some people say that this date can be offensive to Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders and that we should change it.

Would you support or oppose changing the date on which Australia Day is celebrated?

- 1 Strongly support
- 2 Support
- 3 Oppose
- 4 Strongly oppose
- 5 No opinion

36 Some people argue we should increase immigration in order to increase our ethnic and other forms of diversity.

What is your view?

- 1 Yes, more diversity will give Australia a more vibrant society and economy.
- 2 No. We have enough diversity.
- 3 No. We need to encourage national unity and a shared Australian identity.
- 4 Don't know

37 To what extent do you have a sense of belonging to Australia?

- 1 A great extent
- 2 A moderate extent
- 3 Only slightly
- 4 Not at all

And now a few questions about yourself:

- 38 What is the highest qualification you have gained since leaving school?
- 1 No qualification since leaving school, and not currently studying
 - 2 No qualification since leaving school, but currently studying at a university
 - 3 No qualification since leaving school, but currently studying at a TAFE or other vocational college

Your qualification—check the box for your highest qualification only

- 4 University degree, bachelor or post grad *Go to Q39*
- 5 Vocational college diploma
- 6 Other vocational diploma
- 7 Trade qualification

[All non-university graduate respondents skip Q39 and go to Q40]

[For those who said their highest qualification was a university degree, bachelor or postgrad, ie who chose 4 in Q39]

- 39 Which of the groupings below include the field of study of your highest university qualification?
- 1 Science, IT, Engineering, Architecture, and related studies
 - 2 Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, and related health studies
 - 3 Education
 - 4 Management and Commerce
 - 5 Law
 - 6 Society and Culture (including humanities and social science)
 - 7 Creative Arts
 - 8 Other

40 Do you (or you and a partner) own the place where you usually live?

- 1 Yes, I/we own a house outright *[Go to question 41]*
- 2 Yes, I/we own an apartment outright *[Go to question 41]*
- 3 Yes, I/we own a house with a mortgage *[Go to question 41]*
- 4 Yes, I/we own an apartment with a mortgage *[Go to question 41]*
- 5 No *[Go to questions 41]*

41 Do you currently own an investment property or properties?

- 1 Yes, outright *[Go to Q43]*
- 2 Yes, with a mortgage (or mortgages) *[Go to Q43]*
- 3 One (or some) outright, one (or some) with a mortgage *[Go to Q43]*
- 4 No *[Go to Q43]*

[For non-owners, those who chose 5 in Q40]

42 Which of the following best describes your housing situation?

- 1 Renting
- 2 Living with parents
- 3 Homeless
- 4 Have some other housing arrangement

43 How well are you getting on financially these days?

- 1 Living comfortably
- 2 Doing alright
- 3 Just about getting by
- 4 Finding it quite difficult
- 5 Finding it very difficult

44 Do you have a super account?

- 1 Yes, and I am in the retirement phase [Go to Q45]
2 Yes, and I am in the accumulation phase (ie still paying in to your super) [Go to Q46]
2 No [Go to Q47]
3 Don't know [Go to Q47]

45 Is your super account ...?

- 1 Providing you with a comfortable retirement income
2 Providing you with a comfortable retirement income, supplemented by the age pension
3 Not providing you with a comfortable retirement income, even with supplementation by the age pension.

46 Do you think that your super account ...?

- 1 Is likely to provide you with a comfortable retirement income
2 Is likely to provide you with a comfortable retirement income, if supplemented by the age pension
3 Is not likely to provide you with a comfortable retirement income, even with supplementation by the age pension.
4 Don't know

47 In which country or region were you born?

Please write the appropriate number in the space here

Australia	1 [Go to Q49]	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
Former Yugoslavia (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovenia) 10		Central America	23
Other Europe	11	South America	24
China	12	Other	25
India	13	Don't know	26

[Respondents who were not born in Australia answer Q48]

48 When did you arrive in Australia?

Year []

(For all respondents) In which country were your mother and your father born?

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
Former Yugoslavia (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovenia)	10	Central America	23
Other Europe	11	South America	24
China	12	Other	25
India	13	Don't know	26

49 Your mother

50 Your father

51 Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin?

- 1 No
- 2 Yes, Aboriginal
- 3 Yes, Torres Strait Islander
- 4 Yes, both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

52 What is your religion? Please check only one box.

- 1 Catholic
- 2 Anglican (Church of England)
- 3 Uniting Church
- 4 Presbyterian
- 5 Greek Orthodox
- 6 Baptist
- 7 Lutheran
- 8 Other Christian
- 9 Buddhism
- 10 Islam
- 11 Hinduism
- 12 Judaism
- 13 Other
- 15 No religion
- 16 Prefer not to say

Thank you

Notes

- ¹ Paul Kelly, while writing of the fragile majority that put Labor in government, draws on the Australian Election Study to point out that Labor's base very much depends on young people, graduates and women. Paul Kelly, 'Portrait of a politically fractured nation', *The Australian*, 10 December 2022. See also Sarah Cameron, Ian McAllister, Simon Jackman and Jill Sheppard, *The 2022 Australian Election Study*, 2022.
- ² Paul Kelly, 'Changing nation leaves Coalition behind', *The Australian*, 7 December 2022
- ³ John Judis and Ruy Teixeira, *The Emerging Democratic Majority*, Scribner, 2004
- ⁴ See Simon Benson, 'voice outcome can't be decoupled from cost-of-living concerns for most female voters', *The Australian*, 16 July 2023.
- ⁵ Samaras's views are cited in Frank Chung, 'People are not interested': Mortgage belt voters 'losing their homes' are growing 'annoyed' by voice debate', [news.com.au](https://www.news.com.au), 7 August 2023
- ⁶ See Paula Gerber, 'Will things be better for LGBTIQ+ people under Labor? Here's what the new government has promised', *Lens - Monash University*, 3 June 2022; Alan Jones, 'Labor governments defend gender ideology at the expense of children', *The Spectator Australia*, 7 May 2023.
- ⁷ See Table 10: Votes for parties of the right and the left by educational status, 1966 to 2019, in Katharine Betts and Bob Birrell, *A big Australia: why it may all be over*, The [Australian Population Research Institute](https://www.austlii.edu.au/au/other/aukia/australian-population-research-institute/), Melbourne, 2020, p. 21
- ⁸ *ibid.*
- ⁹ The New York Times columnist, Thomas Edsall, provides an excellent historical view of this process. See, Thomas Edsall, *The Point of No Return*, Princeton, 2023. For a close recent analysis of the move of some Hispanics and Blacks towards the Republican party see Patrick Ruffini, *The Party of the People: Inside the Multiracial Populist Coalition Remaking the GOP*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 2023
- ¹⁰ There are substantial numbers of people arriving by aeroplane with temporary visas who then go on to claim political asylum. However these people do not arrive undocumented. In December 2023 1,942 people claimed onshore political asylum. See Monthly Update: Onshore Protection (Subclass 866) Visa Processing - December 2023, [homeaffairs.gov.au](https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au). See also Abul Rizvi, "'Crackdown' on asylum seekers arriving by plane should have begun 10 years ago", *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 January 2024 and Nick McKenzie and Michael Bachelard, "'Millions on planes': Boat focus blinded Home Affairs to real abuses, says Nixon", *The Age*, 7 October 2023.
- ¹¹ The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare reports that, in 2021, 67% of households were homeowners, 32% without a mortgage and 35% with a mortgage. And 31% were renters. Their data are not restricted to voters only but nonetheless the proportions that they report are echoed in the data for this survey.
- ¹² 'The latest data from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) reveals that 2,245,539 Australians or around 20% of Australia's 11.4 million taxpayers owned an investment property in 2020-21.' Brett Warren, 'How many Australians own an investment property?', [Property update](https://www.propertyupdate.com.au), 2024. The population aged 18 plus in 2023 was 20,883,717, From ABS 31010do002_202306 National, state and territory population, June 2023. At the 2021 census 22% of the population aged 18 plus were non-citizens and therefore non-voters.
- ¹³ On November 26, 2023, [Newspoll](https://www.news.com.au) had the Coalition on 38%, Labor 31%, Greens 13%.
- ¹⁴ David Crowe, 'Why Albanese and Chalmers felt they had to break their election pledge on tax cuts', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 January 2024; Brett Worthington, 'Anthony Albanese rebuffs questions of integrity as he defends stage 3 tax cut changes', *ABC News*, 4 February 2024
- ¹⁵ See "'A tax cut for every Australian taxpayer": Anthony Albanese unveils stage 3 tax cut changes', [Channel 9 News](https://www.9news.com.au), 25 January 2024,
- ¹⁶ On February 4, 2024, [Newspoll](https://www.news.com.au) had the Coalition on 36%, Labor on 34% and the Greens on 12%.
- ¹⁷ Katharine Betts and Bob Birrell, 'A big Australia: why it may all be over', Table 10, p. 21, *op. cit.*
- ¹⁸ For a description of the origins and operation of Flexecurity, see, 'Corporatism and Beyond: The Negotiated Economy', in John L. Campbell et al. Eds, *National Identity and the Varieties of Capitalism: The Danish Experience*, 2006, McGill-Queens University Press, Canada, pp. 278-279
- ¹⁹ Australian Government, *Migration Strategy*, December 2023, P. 62
- ²⁰ See for example the Greens spokesperson on housing a homelessness, Max Chandler-Mather and his TV [interview](https://www.9news.com.au) with David Spears, 18 February 2024, where he claimed "that more people coming to this country is a good thing" and "We just don't think that migration is a major cause of the housing crisis". See Leith van Onselen, "Greens: Immigration has minimal impact on housing market", [MacroBusiness](https://www.macrobusiness.com.au), 19 February 2024.
- ²¹ Australian Treasury, [Population Statement 2023](https://www.treasury.gov.au), p. 2
- ²² David McCloskey and Bob Birrell, *Immigration and Housing*, Australian Population Research Institute, forthcoming
- ²³ Documented in *ibid.*