Explaining the 2022 Australian Federal Election Result

ANU Centre for Social Research and Methods

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Acknowledgements

Abstract

In this paper we analyse the factors associated with voting behaviour in May 2022, how that relates to voting intentions at the start of the campaign as well as voting behaviour in the 2019 election, and a summary of some other key findings from the 2022 ANUpoll/Comparative Study of Electoral Systems. Between mid-April and late-May (the start of the campaign and immediately post-election) there was a large increase in satisfaction with the direction of the country. Age and education were key factors explaining voting choice. These two factors were much stronger predictors than sex, country of birth, location, and even household income. These two characteristics – age and education – were the most important demographic characteristics factors explaining the loss in support for the Coalition. In general, Coalition voters tended to be older, non-Indigenous, with low education, living outside of the capital cities, and with a household income that puts them outside of the bottom income quintile. Labor voters tended to have high levels of education, lived in capital cities and had low income. Greens voters tended to be female, young, born in Australia or another English-speaking country, and without a trade qualification. Those who voted for another party tended to have high levels of education, lived outside of a capital city, and had a relatively low household income.

1   Introduction and overview

On the 10th of April 2022, the Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison set the date of the next Federal Election to be the 21st of May 2022. This is almost exactly three years after the previous Federal Election. The day after the election was called, the Social Research Centre on behalf of the ANU Centre for Social Research and Methods began collection of the 50th ANUpoll, a long running survey dating back to 2008. In addition to collecting information on a range of health, wellbeing, and economic measures (including a number of COVID-19 specific measures), the survey asked a representative sample of adult Australians on their voting intentions if an election was held on the day of the interview, as well as views on a range of broader policy areas.

Subsequently, the May 2022 Election led to a change in government for the first time since 2013, with a slim majority for the new Prime Minister Anthony Albanese's Australian Labor Party (ALP). The final allocation of seats is likely to be 77 for the ALP (with 76 required for a majority government), 58 seats for the Liberal/National Party Coalition, 4 seats for the Greens (their highest ever in the lower house) and 12 seats for independent and other minor party candidates.

As this paper was being finished (Friday 17th June) with 89.7 per cent of the vote counted, the Australian Electoral Commission reported that only 68.3 per cent of voters gave their first preference for either the Coalition or the Labor party. This historically low vote for the two largest party groupings suggests that this election may have ushered in a major realignment in Australian voting, with the election of six 'Teal' Independents in previously staunch Liberal Party seats, a dramatic increase in the number of Greens MPs concentrated in Brisbane, and the lowest primary vote ever for an incoming government.

Immediately after the election, the Social Research Centre on behalf of the ANU Centre for Social Research and Methods and the School of Politics and International Relations began collection of a combined ANUpoll/Comparative Study of Electoral Systems survey. Using the probability-based Life in Australia panel, this survey has detailed information on 3,556 adult Australians on who they voted for, their views on policy and institutions, leaders, the pandemic and a range of demographic, socioeconomic, and political attitudes.

The data collection occurred between the 23rd of May and the 5th of June 2022, with 61.1 per cent of the eventual sample completing the survey between the 24th and 26th of May, almost immediately after the election took place and the Prime Minister and a few senior Ministers had been sworn in. The vast majority (96.8 per cent) of interviews were completed online, with 3.2 per cent being completed over the phone. The vast majority of respondents who undertook the May 2022 survey (93.4 per cent or 3,350 respondents) also undertook the April 2022 ANUpoll, meaning information is available on voting intentions and policy attitudes for a very large number of adult Australians at the start of the election campaign and after the election had taken place.

More details on the survey are available in Appendix 1. The survey data will soon be available for download through the Australian Data Archive[1].

In this first paper of results from the combined CSES/ANUpoll sample, we analyse the factors associated with voting behaviour in May 2022, how that relates to voting intentions at the start of the campaign as well as voting behaviour in the 2019 election, and a summary of some other key findings from the data.

2   Voting patterns – May 2019, April 2022, and May 2022 compared

Respondents to the May 2022 ANUpoll were asked 'In the Federal election for the House of Representatives on Saturday 21st May, which party did you vote for first in the House of Representatives?' with the instruction given that: 'If you voted in person or by mail, this was the smaller, green ballot paper.' Respondents were also asked 'In the last Federal election in May 2019, when the Liberals were led by Scott Morrison and Labor by Bill Shorten, which party got your **first preference** then in the **House of Representatives** election? [bold in original]. Respondents to the April 2022 ANUpoll were asked: 'If a federal election for the House of Representatives was held today, which one of the following parties would you vote for?' We can combine responses to these questions to look at changes in voting patterns between the last election, and during the election campaign.

Using population weights so the sample reflects demographically the Australian adult population, 3.1 per cent of the ANUpoll population were estimated to have not voted (despite being eligible), 6.7 per cent were not eligible to vote, 0.3 per cent did not know who they voted for, and 2.1 per cent refused to answer the question. Excluding the above four groups, the following table gives the estimated per cent of Australians based on their May 2022 vote, April 2022 voting intentions, and their recall of the May 2019 vote. A final data point (the first column) comes from the 2022 vote count being undertaken by the AEC, with 89.7 per cent of votes counted, as of June 15th, 2022.

Compared to the preliminary vote count, the May 2022 survey results appear to have a relatively high Labor and Greens vote, but a relatively low Coalition and other vote. There are four potential reasons for this difference. First, the AEC vote count is still ongoing, with more than 10 per cent of votes still to be counted. Second, the weights for the Life in Australia panel are benchmarked to the Australian resident population rather than the registered voting population, and includes people who are in Australia but not eligible to vote but excludes people who were not in Australia but were eligible to vote.[2] Third, there may be some recall bias in our sample with those who were unsure who they voted for defaulting to the party that ended up winning the election. Finally, even with weights, there is likely to be sampling error in any survey, based on random variation in who is invited to participate and a combination of random and non-random error in who agrees to take part.

Compared to April 2022 voting intentions (which remember are collected from the same individuals), there was an increase in the Coalition primary vote, and a decline in the Labor primary vote. There was also a small increase in the vote for the Greens and for 'Other' parties, which include the independents.

Compared to the May 2019 votes of those who were eligible to vote in 2022 and did so, there was a large decline in the Coalition primary vote, and an increase in the vote for the Greens. The largest relative increase, however, was for those who voted for another party, increasing from 8.6 per cent to 12.9 per cent.

Table 1   Voting behaviour and intentions – Eligible Australians who voted in the 2022 election

	Preliminary vote count	May 2022 survey	April 2022 intentions	May 2019 recall
Coalition	35.8	31.9	32.4	40.6
Labor	32.6	35.4	38.4	35.1
Greens	12.2	19.8	17.9	15.8
Other	19.5	12.9	11.4	8.6

Source: ANUpoll, April and May 2022, and https://www.abc.net.au/news/elections/federal/2022/results/party-totals

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Notes: Preliminary vote count is as of 15th June 2022. The April 2022 intentions includes those who voted in the May 2022 election, who expressed an intention in April 2022, and were able to be linked longitudinally. The May 2019 recall includes those who voted in the May 2022 election and who stated a vote for May 2019.

3   Demographic and socioeconomic patterns that predict the 2022 vote

There has been a range of analyses since the election, trying to understand the factors associated with the election win for Labor, the strong showing of the Greens and other parties, and the decline in the primary vote and number of seats won by the Coalition. By necessity (there is no information on individual characteristics of voters on any of the official counts), this analysis has been undertaken using the characteristics of people who lived in the electorate (or smaller geography, including booths) as of the 2016 election as the key explanatory variables. While this is informative, it suffers from two main limitations.

First, the demographic data used for the analysis is now six years out of date, with 2021 Census data not available till the end of June 2022. Secondly, this type of analysis suffers from what is known as the ecological fallacy (Piantadosi et al. 1988) whereby variation within areas is obscured. For example, it may be the case that areas with a high percentage of females or young Australians were more likely to vote for a particular candidate. However, that doesn't tell us anything about the voting behaviour of the females within those areas relative to males, or the voting behaviour of young Australians relative to older Australians within those electorates.

An alternative analytical approach is summarised below, looking at individual voting patterns. Specifically, we use a multinomial probit model and analyse the relationship between demographic, socioeconomic, household and area level characteristics and voting in the May 2022 election. The base category which we compare against is those who voted for the Coalition in May 2022, and we exclude those who were not eligible to vote, did not vote, did not know who they voted for, or refused to answer. The sample size for the analysis is 2,936 respondents, with a slight sample drop due to the relatively high number of people who did not state their household income. Full results are presented in Table 1, in Appendix 2.

Controlling for other characteristics and compared to Coalition voters, females were no more or less likely to vote for Labor compared to males, but had a higher probability of having voted for the Greens. There were no significant differences in the probability of voting for another party, perhaps because the probability of voting for an independent and One Nation/UAP are in opposite directions.

Outside of the modelling framework, there were large differences in voting for Coalition relative to Labor for females (30.0 per cent voted Coalition and 35.2 per cent voted Labor) compared to males (34.2 per cent voted Coalition and 35.7 per cent voted Labor). However, the modelling shows that this difference is mostly due to a higher vote for the Greens (which admittedly is likely to have flowed back to Labor through preferences) and also by other observable characteristics which are held constant in the model.

Other demographic characteristics also matter. Young Australians were slightly more likely to have voted for Labor (though the p-value is greater than 0.1), substantially more likely to have voted for the Greens, but no more or less likely to have voted for another party. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians appear more likely to have voted for Labor, the Greens, and another party. Because of relatively small sample sizes, however, the differences are not

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statistically significant. There were very few differences by broad country of birth. Those who spoke a language other than English at home were, however, less likely to have voted for Labor, the Greens, and another party

Education was highly predictive of voting behaviour, and in many ways was the major determinants of who a person voted for in the 2022 election. In the modelling analysis, those who had not completed Year 12 were substantially less likely to have voted Labor rather than the Coalition compared to those who had, but those who had a degree were more likely to vote Labor than those with no qualification. Those who had not completed Year 12 were less likely to vote Greens, whereas those with a degree were slightly more likely. Those with a Certificate III/IV or Diploma appear to be slightly less likely to vote for the Greens than those with no qualification. Those who had a degree and those who had a Certificate III/IV or Diploma were more likely to vote for another party than those with no qualification.

Figure 2 summarises the differences by education level, without controlling for other characteristics. The scale of the differences are very large, especially by high school education, with 47.1 per cent of those Australians who had not completed Year 12 voting for the Coalition compared to 29.3 per cent of those who had completed Year 12. On the other hand, only 13.1 per cent of those who had not completed Year 12 voted for the Greens (compared to 21.0 per cent of those who had completed Year 12).

Figure 2   Voting patterns by education, May 2022
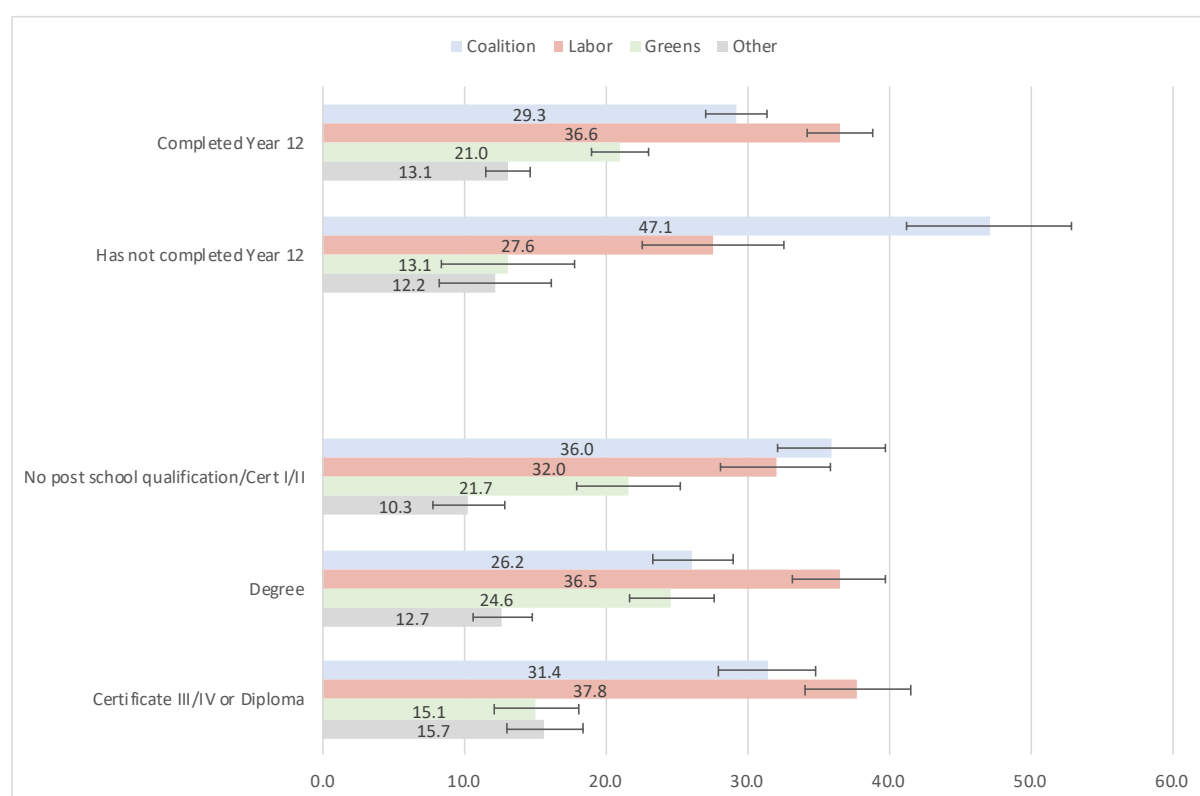
Note: The "whiskers" on the bars indicate the 95 per cent confidence intervals for the estimate.

Source: ANUpoll, May 2022

Returning to the modelling analysis, there were no large differences in voting behaviour across the socioeconomic characteristics of the area in which a person lived. However, those who

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lived outside of a capital city were less likely to vote Labor, the Greens, but not for another party.

There were some important differences across household income in terms of the probability of voting Labor compared to the Coalition though. Keeping in mind that we are controlling for education levels, it is interesting to note that those in the lowest income quintile were more likely to vote Labor than those in the middle-income quintile. Compared to those who lived in the middle-income quintile, those with low income appear to be more likely to have voted for the Greens (albeit with a p-value just above 0.1). Those in the lowest income quintile appear substantially more likely to have voted for another party (which includes independents).

Taken together, a series of patterns emerge with regards to individual, household, and area level characteristics of voters for the four party groupings:

- Coalition voters tended to be older, non-Indigenous, with low education, living outside of the capital cities, and with a household income that puts them outside of the bottom income quintile
- Labor voters tended to have high levels of education and lived in capital cities.
- Greens voters tended to be female, young, born in Australia or another English-speaking country, and without a trade qualification.
- Those who voted for another party tended to have high levels of education, lived outside of a capital city, and had a relatively low household income

4 Changes in voting patterns between April and May 2022

There is a belief that many Australians only start paying attention to who they would vote for once the election campaign begins. There is some evidence for this in the May 2022 ANUpoll/CSES with a little under half of respondents saying that they had made up their mind who they would definitely vote for prior to the commencement of the campaign, with 31.5 per cent saying they made up their mind 'A long time ago' and a further 14.9 per cent saying they made up their mind 'A few months ago, before election day was announced.' This leaves more than half of Australians undecided at the start of the campaign with 9.5 per cent who say they made up their mind 'About the time the election was announced, on Sunday, 10 April', 10.7 per cent 'In the first few weeks of the campaign', 19.7 per cent 'A few days before election day' and 13.6 per cent who made up their mind 'On election day.'

Furthermore, of those individuals who completed both the May and April 2022 ANUpolls, 5.5 per cent did not know who they would vote for if an election was held on the day of the April ANUpoll data collection. Of these 176 undecided voters in our sample, 18.5 per cent ended up voting for the Coalition, 17.5 per cent ended up voting for Labor, 13.7 per cent ended up voting for the Greens, and 14.8 per cent ended up voting for another party. This leaves 9.0 per cent who did not end up voting, 12.7 per cent who were not eligible to vote, 3.0 per cent who did not know who they voted for, and 10.8 per cent who refused to answer. The undecided voters prior to the election end up voting very differently to the rest of the population.

4.1 Voting flows

Even amongst those who expressed a voting intention in April 2022, there was a fair degree of change during the election campaign. Figure 3 focuses on those who voted in the May 2022 and who knew who they would vote for in April 2022, summarising the flows across the four main party groupings. The size of the 'ribbons' are proportional to the estimated number of in-scope Australians with that combination of voting intentions/behaviour with the numbers

in brackets at the left and right nodes giving the per cent of in-scope Australians who intended to vote for that party grouping or ended up voting for that party grouping respectively. Table 2 in Appendix 2 gives the data used to generate the figure.

The majority of Australians voted for the party grouping in May 2022 that they said they would vote for in April 2022, with only 21.9 per cent of respondents changing their voting intention. This was remarkably similar to the estimate of voting change using similar data after the 2019 election (21.4 per cent) though the direction of the flows were quite different.

The most stable voting group from April 2022 was those who intended to vote for the Coalition, with 82.5 per cent of those who intended to vote Coalition in April 2022 ending up doing so in May 2022. There was greater change for those who intended to vote Labor (77.8 per cent ended up voting Labor) and Greens (79.0 per cent ended up voting Greens), with only 65.6 per cent of those who intended to vote for another party ending up doing so.

The largest aggregate flow between April and May 2022 was from Labor to the Greens (4.0 per cent of all voters). This was about twice as large as the flow from Labor to the Greens during the 2019 election campaign (2.0 per cent) and also larger than the flow from the Greens to Labor during the 2022 election (2.4 per cent).

During the 2022 election, there was a very slight net flow towards Labor amongst the two major parties, with 3.0 per cent of total voters switching from the Coalition to Labor and 2.0 per cent of total voters switching from Labor to the Coalition. During the 2019 election, on the other hand, there was a slight net flow in the opposite direction, with 2.5 per cent of total voters switching from the Coalition to Labor and 3.0 per cent of total voters switching from Labor to the Coalition.

During the 2019 election, the largest aggregate flow was from other parties to the Coalition (4.6 per cent of all voters). During the 2022 election, however, the size of this flow was much smaller (1.6 per cent), with a slightly higher number of voters switching from the Coalition to another party (1.8 per cent).

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Figure 3   Voting flows, April 2022 to May 2022
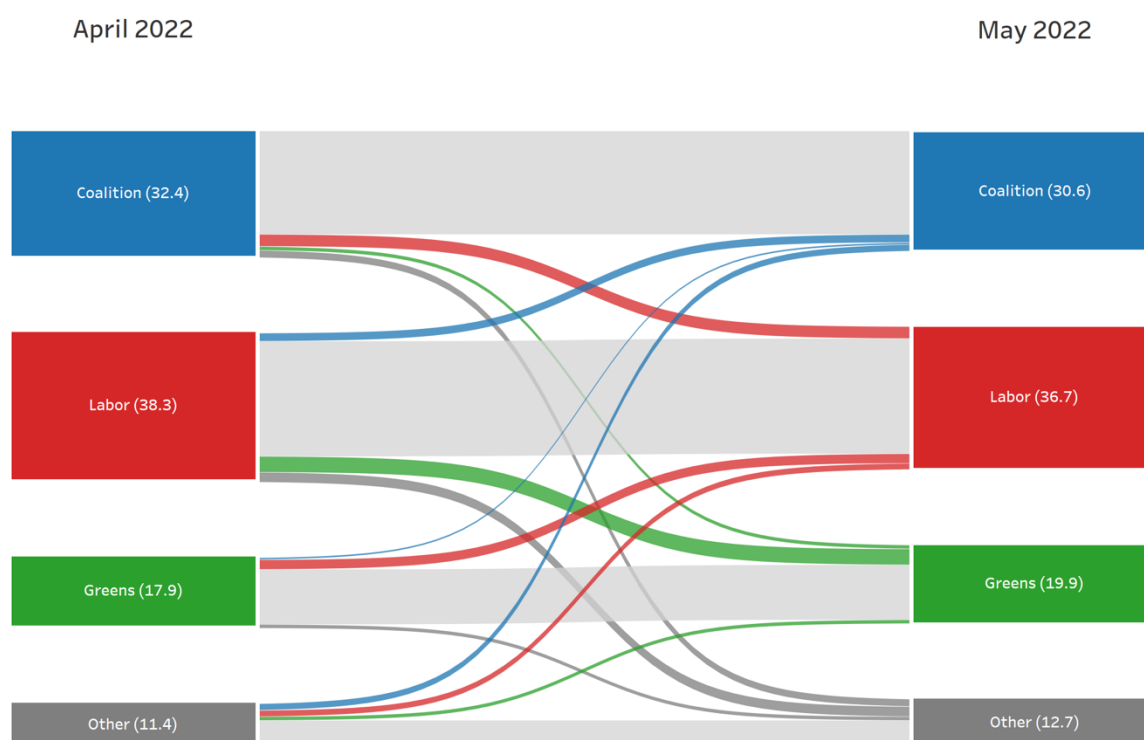
April 2022   May 2022

Source: ANUpoll, April and May 2022

Note: This figure only includes those who gave a party preference/vote in both surveys.

4.2   Reasons for vote change

Respondents to the May 2022 survey who also completed the April 2022 survey and who changed their vote over the period were first reminded that 'In the April Life in Australia™ survey, you indicated that you would vote for <…> if an election were held at the time', with their response to the April survey in the brackets. They were then asked 'What influenced your final decision to vote for the <…> in the recent Federal election for the House of Representatives?' with their response to the May survey in the brackets

There were 675 respondents who were asked the question, with eight non-mutually exclusive coded responses and the option to give an 'other' response. Figure 4 summarises the reasons given for changing vote from both the 2022 and 2019 elections, with Table 4 in the appendix giving the percentages separately depending on the party grouping that the respondent changed from and to (with Greens/other parties combined). It should be noted that there are some groupings that people could change within (for example from National to Liberal, or Greens to Independent). These are included in the totals, but not in Table 4.

The most common response option given in both 2022 and 2019 (given by 32.2 per cent and 25.0 per cent of relevant respondents) was that their view on the local candidate changed. This response was even more likely to be given by those who changed their vote from the Coalition to Greens/other parties (43.6 per cent of relevant respondents).

In 2022, views on the leaders of the major parties were more commonly given as a reason to change votes than views on policy announcements. In particular, 33.7 per cent of those who

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changed their vote from the Coalition to Labor gave their view on the Opposition leader changing as a reason for that change, as did 31.1 per cent of those who changed their vote from Greens/other to Labor.

Figure 4   Reasons given for changing vote, May 2019 and May 2020
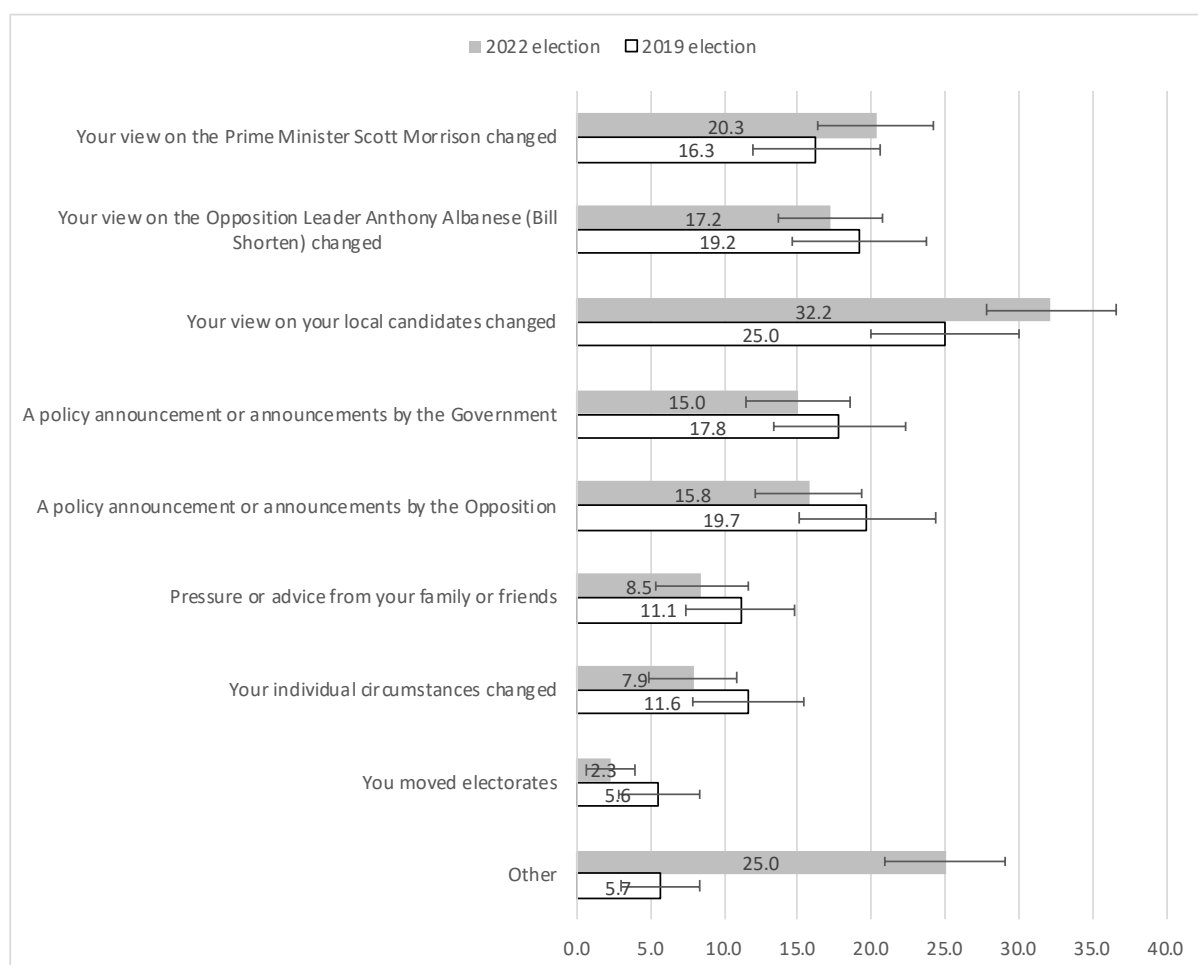
Note: The "whiskers" on the bars indicate the 95 per cent confidence intervals for the estimate.

Source: ANUpoll, May 2022, CSES, June 2019

5   Changes in voting patterns between May 2019 and May 2022

There was a greater level of change in a person's vote between May 2019 and May 2022 (Figure 5 and Appendix Table 5) than there was between April 2022 and May 2022. Between the last two elections (and focusing on those who voted in both elections), 28.4 per cent of Australians were estimated to have voted for a different party grouping. By contrast, using the 2019 Australian Election Study to compare recalled vote in the 2016 and 2019 elections, the proportion who changed their vote between the two elections was 24.2 per cent. This was a slight decrease in the proportion who changed their vote between 2013 and 2016, which was 26.3 per cent

There was a similar level of stability for those who voted Coalition, Labor, and Greens in May 2019, with 72.3 per cent of former Coalition voters again voting for the Coalition, 72.5 per cent of Labor voters again voted for Labor, and 74.7 per cent of those who voted for Greens again voting for Greens (now the most stable amongst the three major party groupings). However,

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only 58.6 per cent of those who voted for another party in May 2019 again doing so in May 2022

The largest aggregate flow was from the Coalition to Labor. 5.9 per cent of the total relevant Australian population voted for the Coalition in May 2019 but for Labor in 2022. The next largest flow was from Labor to the Greens, with 5.2 per of the total Australian population switching their vote from Labor to the Greens. The fact that a large proportion of these Greens voters were likely to preference Labor ahead of the Coalition in most electorates explains the swing in the two-party preferred vote over the period.

There were net flows to the fourth party grouping (other) from all the other three party groupings. However, the greatest aggregate flow was from those who voted for the Coalition in 2019 to those who voted for an other party in 2022, representing 3.9 per cent of the total linked population.

Figure 5   Voting flows, May 2019 to May 2022
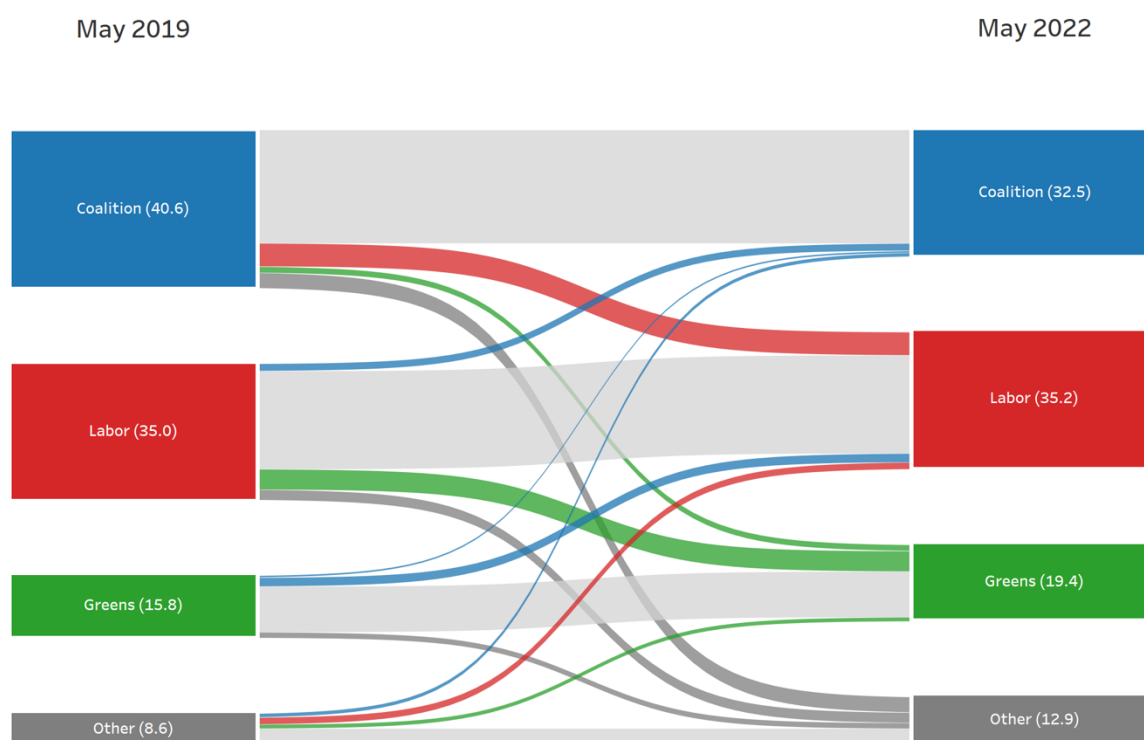
Source: ANUpoll, April and May 2022

Note: This figure only includes those who voted in May 2019 and May 2022.

5.1   Explaining voting flows

There were some major differences in the likelihood of changing votes over the period across demographic, socioeconomic, and geographic factors with Table 6 in the Appendix summarising a regression analysis of the factors associated with this change. Specifically, the dependent variable is the probability of voting for a different party grouping in the May 2022 election compared to the May 2019 election. In Model 1, we estimate the model across all those who voted in each election, and control for the party grouping the person voted for in May 2019. In Model 2, we focus on those who voted for the Coalition in 2019 (of whom 27.7

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per cent changed their vote) and in Model 3 we focus on those who voted for Labor in 2019 (27.5 per cent changed their vote).

Focusing on all voters, those who voted for another party in 2019 were more likely to have changed their vote than those who voted for one of the three major parties. Interestingly, there was no significant difference between Coalition and Labor voters, but it appears that when we control for other factors it is Greens voters that have the lowest probability of changing their vote.

Demographically, there were no differences between males and females, but older Australians (aged 55 years and over) were less likely to have changed their vote than younger Australians. Those born overseas in an English-speaking country are more likely to have changed their vote, as were those who lived in a non-capital city.

When we focus on the factors associated with the main change that led to a change in government over the period – those who voted Coalition in May 2019 but voted for a different party in May 2022 – some very interesting patterns emerge. Older Australians were once again less likely to change their vote, with a simple comparison of proportions (that is, outside of the modelling framework) suggesting 34.9 per cent of former Coalition voters aged under 55 years changing their vote compared to 21.1 per cent of those aged 55 years and over.

Education also mattered when it comes to Coalition voters, particularly high school education. Specifically, 31.0 per cent of those Coalition voters (as of 2019) who had completed Year 12 voting for a different party grouping in 2022 compared to 14.8 per cent of those who had not completed Year 12.

Finally, location seems to matter, both in terms of former Coalition voters and former Labor voters. For former Coalition voters, 30.7 per cent of who lived in a capital city changed their vote compared to 23.0 per cent of those who did not live in a capital city. The difference was similar for former Labor voters (Model 3) though it was in the opposite direction. That is, 25.6 per cent of former Labor voters who lived in a capital city changed their vote compared to 31.5 per cent of those who did not live in a capital city.

Taken together, these results suggest that the change in government over the previous two elections was mainly driven by younger, urban and more well educated Coalition voters in 2019 changing their vote away from the Coalition, with the Labor party able to maintain their support across most demographic groups, apart from those outside of capital cities.

6   House of Representatives and Senate Comparisons

As a bicameral system, at each federal election (and some state elections) Australians vote both for who they would like to represent their electorate in the House of Representatives, as well as the Senators for their state/territory. Although the party that forms government (and hence fills ministerial positions) is decided by who has a majority in the House of Representatives, the relative distribution of Senators across parties can have a strong impact on the ability to pass legislation. Furthermore, it is frequently the case that very senior ministers within government are Senators or members of the upper house, as opposed to members of the lower house.

For the six Australian states, there are twelve senators in total, with it usually being the case (apart from double dissolution elections) that six senators are elected at each election. In the

two territories, there are only two senators each, with these senators up for re-election at every election.

Immediately following the question on House of Representatives voting, respondents were asked 'Which party did you vote for in the Senate election?' with a further instruction given of 'If you voted in person or by mail, this was the larger, white ballot paper.' After excluding those who did not vote, were not eligible, did not know, or refused to answer, 30.9 per cent of the weighted sample voting first for Coalition Senators, 33.7 per cent voted for Labor, 21.8 per cent voted for the Greens, and 13.7 per cent voted for another party.

While this Senate vote had a similar distribution to the House of Representatives distribution presented earlier, there were still a minority of Australians (15.6 per cent) who voted for a different party in the upper house compared to the lower house, which appears to have been a decline from previous elections (Cameron and McAllister 2019). Furthermore, it is only possible to identify these split-ticket voters in Australia using survey data like the ANUpoll/CSES. Figure 6 summarises these flows between party groupings, with the underlying data available in Appendix Table 7.

Of those who voted for the Coalition in the House of Representatives, only 9.8 per cent voted for a party other than the Coalition in the Senate. This is the lowest proportion of split-ticket voting amongst our four-party grouping. The per cent who changed votes across the two houses was roughly equivalent for those who voted Labor (16.5 per cent) and the Greens (15.6 per cent) in the House of Representatives, with 27.8 per cent of those who voted for a minor party in the House of Representatives voting for one of the three major parties in the Senate.

The largest aggregate flow was from Labor voters in the House of Representatives to the Greens in the Senate, representing 3.3 per cent of the total voting population. The flow in the opposite direction (Greens in the House of Representatives to Labor in the Senate) was much smaller (1.6 per cent).

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Figure 6   Split-ticket voting flows, House of Representatives to Senate, May 2022
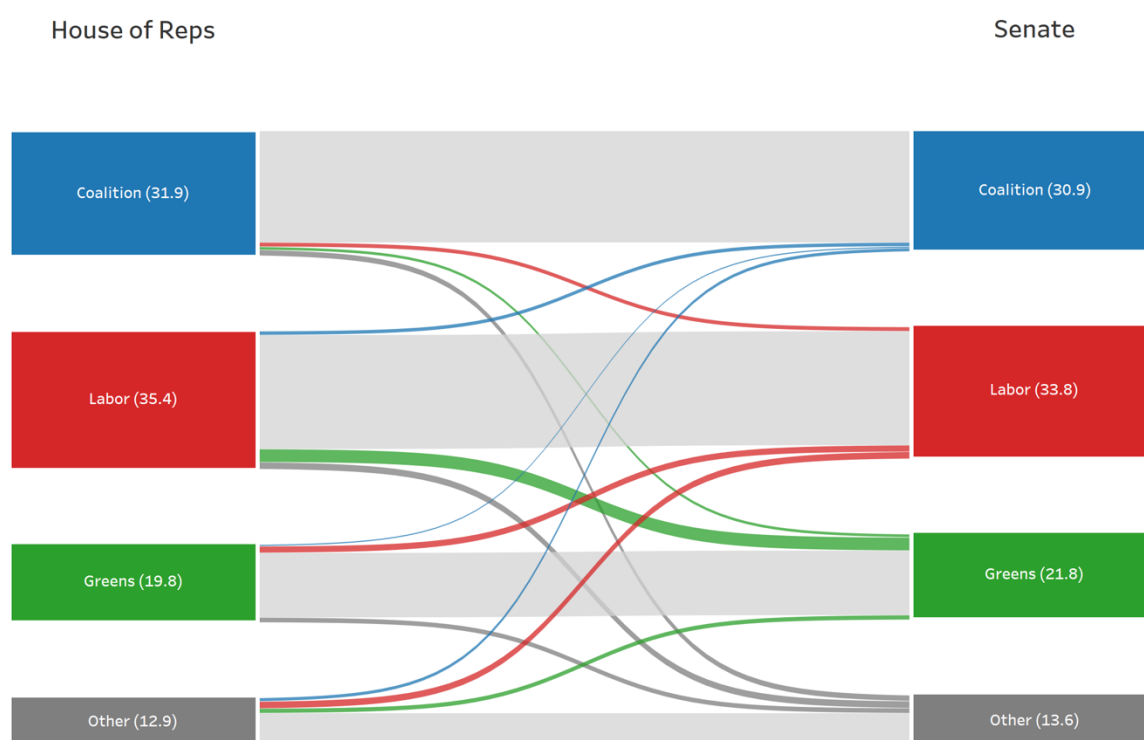
Source: ANUpoll, April and May 2022

Note: This figure only includes those who voted in both the Senate and House of Representatives.

Modelling the probability of voting for a different party in the two houses (conditional on who the person voted for in the House of Representatives) in Appendix Table 8 shows very little variation by demographic and geographic characteristics, but some differences by education. Those who had not completed Year 12 were far less likely to vote for a different party in the two houses than someone who had completed Year 12 (7.7 per cent compared to 16.8 per cent without controlling for other characteristics). For those with qualifications, the highest per cent of split-ticket voters was those with a post-graduate degree, with 21.2 per cent voting for a different party compared to 12.9 per cent of those without any qualifications.

7   Post-election views

In any election, even when there are large majorities in the house of representatives (which was not the case in 2022) there are inevitably a large proportion of people whose party that they voted for will not form government. While the acceptance of the outcomes of the election is a key feature of a democracy, this does not mean that people will be equally happy with the outcome.

One measure that captures (indirectly) the effect of the election is satisfaction with the direction of the country. Figure 7 shows the per cent of Australians who say they were satisfied or very satisfied in response to the question 'Firstly, a general question about your views on living in Australia. All things considered, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way the country is heading?' Because this question has been asked since prior to the pandemic in

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Australia on the longitudinal sample that is used for the May 2022 ANUpoll/CSES, it is possible to construct an extended time series.

The figure shows a very large increase in satisfaction with the direction of the country, from 62.4 per cent of Australians being satisfied or very satisfied in April 2022 to 73.3 per cent in May 2022

Figure 7   Per cent of Australians satisfied or very satisfied with the direction of the country – October 2019 to May 2022
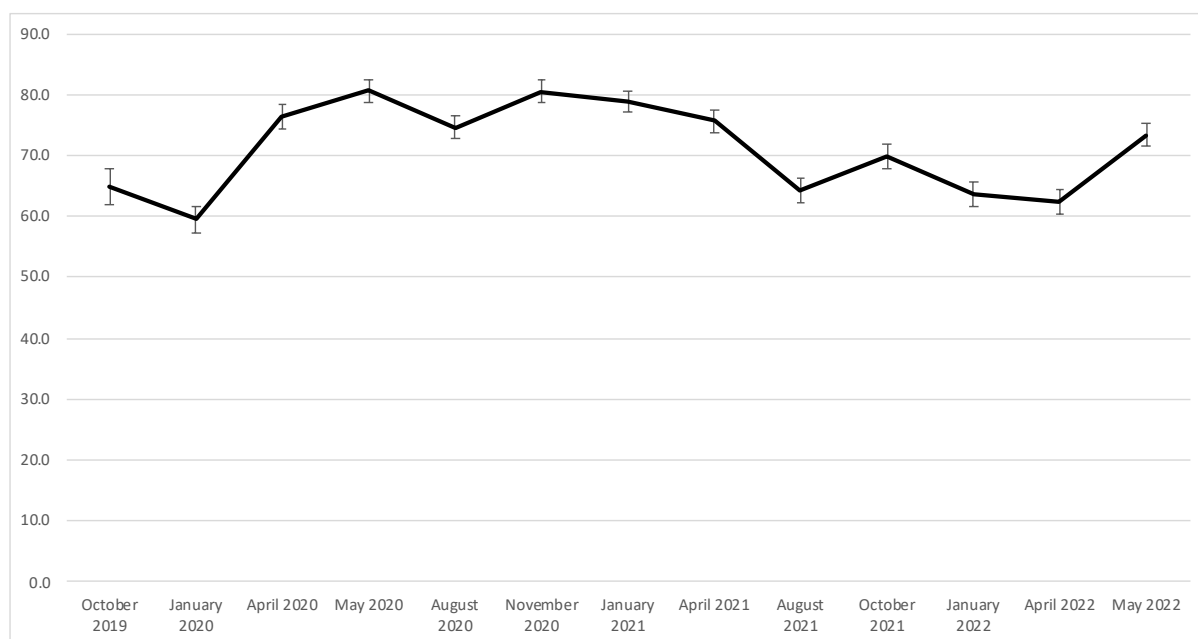
Note: The "whiskers" on the lines indicate the 95 per cent confidence intervals for the estimate.

Source: ANUpoll: October 2019; January, April, May, August, and November 2020; January, April, August and October 2021; and January, April, and May 2022

Not surprisingly, there were quite different changes in satisfaction with the direction of the country depending on who the person voted for in the election. For those who voted for the Coalition, satisfaction went down from to 86.7 to 76.8 per cent. For Labor voters though, satisfaction went up from 58.2 to 79.1 per cent, for Greens voters it went up from 40.8 to 69.2 per cent and for those who voted for another party it went up from 40.0 to 54.4 per cent.

Despite satisfaction with direction of the country declining for those who voted for the Coalition, most Australians seem happy with the conduct of the election, and their own decision. Most people who did vote were either very satisfied (43.7 per cent) or fairly satisfied (45.1 per cent) with how they voted for in the election, with only 10.2 per cent not very satisfied and 1.0 per cent not at all satisfied. There were some differences in satisfaction with one's own vote though, with 14.6 per cent of Coalition voters not very or not at all satisfied alongside 18.2 per cent of those who voted for another party. This compared to only 7.3 per cent of Labor and 8.2 per cent of Greens voters dissatisfied.

Most Australians also thought the election was conducted fairly with an average value of 1.81 (where 1 = election was conducted fairly and 5 the election was conducted unfairly) and 55.4 per cent of Australians giving a value of 1. There are some slightly concerning differences in views on the fairness of the election, depending on who the person voted for. The average value for Coalition voters was 1.81, which was significantly above Labor voters (1.59) and to a

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lesser extent Greens voters (1.72). The group with the most negative view though was those who voted for another party, with an average value of 2.27. For this group, 10.0 per cent gave a value of 5 (conducted unfairly) and 10.6 per cent a value of 4, compared to 3.8 and 5.1 per cent respectively for all voters.

8   Concluding comments

The Australian population seems generally satisfied with the outcome and the conduct of the 2022 Federal election. Between mid-April and late-May (the start of the campaign and immediately post-election) there was a large increase in satisfaction with the direction of the country. This cannot be definitively attributed to the election itself, but satisfaction increased for those who voted Labor, Greens, and other parties, whilst declining for those who voted for the Coalition. The vast majority of Australians were satisfied with who they voted for, and most also thought that the election was conducted fairly.

Voter volatility in the 2022 election was quite similar to what it was in the 2019 election. A similar proportion of Australians voted for a different party across those two elections as between the 2016 and 2019 election, and there was a remarkably similar proportion across the two elections of Australians who voted for a different party to that which they had intended to vote in the last survey prior to the election. Split-ticket voting, where someone votes for a different party in the House of Representatives compared to the Senate, was also low but appears to have declined since the last election.

Despite that seeming stability, longitudinal and detailed cross-sectional analysis presented in this paper showed some real differences across population sub-groups in voting patterns, and voting change. Age and education were once again one of the key factors explaining voting choice. These two factors were much stronger predictors than sex, country of birth, location, and even household income. For example, 47.1 per cent of those Australians who had not completed Year 12 voting for the Coalition compared to 29.3 per cent of those who had completed Year 12. There are similar differences by age, with 49.0 per cent of those aged 65 years and over voting for the Coalition compared to 26.7 per cent of those aged under 65, and only 18.1 per cent of those aged under 35. Indeed, there were almost twice as many Australians aged under 35 who voted for the Greens (36.0 per cent) compared to those who voted for the Coalition.

The analysis also suggests that these two characteristics – age and education – were the most important demographic characteristics factors explaining the loss in support for the Coalition. Older Australians were less likely to change their vote, with 34.9 per cent of former Coalition voters (that is, in 2019) aged under 55 years changing their vote compared to 21.1 per cent of those aged 55 years and over. Furthermore 31.0 per cent of Coalition voters as of 2019 who had completed Year 12 voted for a different party grouping in 2022 compared to 14.8 per cent of those who had not completed Year 12.

In general, voters for the different party groupings shared some characteristics with each other. Coalition voters tended to be older, non-Indigenous, with low education, living outside of the capital cities, and with a household income that puts them outside of the bottom income quintile. Labor voters tended to have high levels of education and lived in capital cities. Greens voters tended to be female, young, born in Australia or another English-speaking country, and without a trade qualification. Those who voted for another party tended to have high levels of education, lived outside of a capital city, and had a relatively low household income.

Explaining the 2022 election result

A final concluding comment is to highlight the importance of high-quality survey data to understand voting patterns and changes. By undertaking the survey on a non-probability panel, it is possible to make robust conclusions about the Australian population, rather than just the particular survey sample. By linking longitudinally, it is possible to look at voting intentions prior to the election, as well as views on a range of policy and social issues for the same individuals for whom we have actual 2022 (and 2019) vote. It is intended that more in-depth analysis of these patterns be undertaken and, with data available on the Australian Data Archive, for others to be able to undertake their own analysis.

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References

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Appendix 1   About the survey

Data collection for the May 2022 ANUpoll commenced on the 23rd of May 2022 with a pilot test of telephone respondents. The main data collection commenced on the 24th of May and concluded on the 5th of June. The final sample size for the survey is 3,556 respondents. 61.5 per cent of the sample had completed the survey 26th of May.

The average survey length for those completing the survey was 18.7 minutes. The survey was longer for members completing over the phone (26.8 minutes) compared to members who self-completed completed online (18.4 minutes).

The Social Research Centre collected data online and through Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) in order to ensure representation from the offline Australian population. Around 3.2 per cent of interviews were collected via CATI. The contact methodology adopted for the online Life in Australia™ members is an initial survey invitation via email and SMS (where available), followed by multiple email reminders and a reminder SMS. Telephone follow up of panel members who have not yet completed the survey commenced in the second week of fieldwork and consisted of reminder calls encouraging completion of the online survey. The contact methodology for offline Life in Australia™ members was an initial SMS (where available), followed by an extended call-cycle over a two-week period. A reminder SMS was also sent in the second week of fieldwork.

A total of 4,338 respondents were invited to take part in the survey, leading to a wave-specific completion rate of 82.0 per cent. Taking into account recruitment to the panel, the cumulative response rate for this survey is around 6.8 per cent. Of those who had completed the May 2022 survey, 3,350 respondents (93.4 per cent) had completed the April 2022 survey.

Unless otherwise stated, data in the paper is weighted to population benchmarks. For Life in Australia™, the approach for deriving weights generally consists of the following steps:

1.   Compute a base weight for each respondent as the product of two weights:

   a. Their enrolment weight, accounting for the initial chances of selection and subsequent post-stratification to key demographic benchmarks

   b. Their response propensity weight, estimated from enrolment information available for both respondents and non-respondents to the present wave.

2.   Adjust the base weights so that they satisfy the latest population benchmarks for several demographic characteristics.

The ethical aspects of this research have been approved by the ANU Human Research Ethics Committee (2021/430).

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Appendix 2 Data Tables

Table 1 Factors associated with voting behaviour, May 2022

Explanatory variables	Party grouping (dependent variables)					
	Labor		Greens		Other	
	Coeff.	Signif.	Coeff.	Signif.	Coeff.	Signif.
Female	0.034		0.195	*	-0.075	
Aged 18 to 24 years	0.269		0.666	**	0.157	
Aged 25 to 34 years	0.108		0.499	***	0.005	
Aged 45 to 54 years	-0.321	**	-0.524	***	-0.060	
Aged 55 to 64 years	-0.361	**	-0.698	***	-0.376	**
Aged 65 to 74 years	-0.614	***	-1.217	***	-0.704	***
Aged 75 years plus	-0.879	***	-1.725	***	-0.869	***
Indigenous	0.366		0.319		0.685	*
Born overseas in a main English-speaking country	0.166		0.139		0.051	
Born overseas in a non-English speaking country	0.116		-0.094		-0.080	
Speaks a language other than English at home	-0.286	*	-0.320	*	-0.411	**
Has not completed Year 12 or post-school qualification	-0.356	**	-0.387	*	-0.001	
Has a post graduate degree	0.237		0.297		0.474	**
Has an undergraduate degree	0.254	*	0.121		0.522	***
Has a Certificate III/IV, Diploma or Associate Degree	0.123		-0.226		0.385	**
Lives in the most disadvantaged areas (1st quintile)	0.231		-0.096		0.140	
Lives in next most disadvantaged areas (2nd quintile)	-0.073		-0.102		0.036	
Lives in next most advantaged areas (4th quintile)	-0.038		-0.028		-0.146	
Lives in the most advantaged areas (5th quintile)	-0.160		-0.213		0.054	
Lives in another capital city	-0.405	***	-0.261	**	0.036	
Lives in lowest income household (1st quintile)	0.316	**	0.230		0.427	***
Lives in next lowest income household (2nd quintile)	0.210		0.114		0.312	*
Lives in next highest income household (4th quintile)	0.040		-0.190		-0.073	
Lives in highest income household (5th quintile)	-0.139		-0.055		-0.093	
Constant	0.362		0.135		-0.713	***
Sample size			2,936			

Source: ANUpoll, May 2022

Notes: Multinomial Probit Regression Models. The base case individual is male; aged 35 to 44 years; non-Indigenous; born in Australia; does not speak a language other than English at home; has completed Year 12 but does not have a post-graduate degree; lives in neither an advantaged or disadvantaged suburb (third quintile); lives in a capital city; lives in neither a high income or low income household (third quintile). Coefficients that are statistically significant at the 1 per cent level of significance are labelled ***; those significant at the 5 per cent level of significance are labelled **, and those significant at the 10 per cent level of significance are labelled *.

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Explaining the 2022 election result

Table 2   Voting flows – April 2022 to May 2022

May 2022 vote	April 2022 intentions			
	Coalition	Labor	Greens	Other
Coalition	26.7	2.0	0.4	1.6
Labor	3.0	29.8	2.4	1.5
Greens	0.9	4.0	14.2	0.9
Other	1.8	2.5	1.0	7.5

Source: ANUpoll, April and May 2022

Table 3   Voting flows – April 2019 to May 2019

May 2019 vote	April 2019 intentions			
	Coalition	Labor	Greens	Other
Coalition	33.9	3.0	0.7	4.6
Labor	2.5	28.9	3.1	1.3
Greens	1.1	2.1	9.7	0.5
Other	1.4	0.6	0.5	6.0

Source: ANUpoll, April 2019 and CSES, June 2019

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Table 4   Reasons for voting change by April 2022 and May 2022 vote

	Your view on the Prime Minister Scott Morrison changed	Your view on the Opposition Leader Anthony Albanese changed	Your view on your local candidates changed	A policy announcement or announcements by the Government	A policy announcement or announcements by the Opposition	Pressure or advice from your family or friends	Your individual circumstances changed	You moved electorates	Other
From Coalition to Labor	33.7	31.1	23.4	16.8	17.6	17.4	5.0	0.4	6.8
From Coalition to Greens/other	29.7	9.5	43.6	26.4	17.5	13.7	14.8	0.2	14.2
From Labor to Coalition	26.8	22.7	22.4	18.8	18.2	22.0	1.9	7.2	7.3
From Labor to Greens/other	14.3	9.5	32.9	12.6	17.6	4.7	11.1	2.8	34.5
From Greens/other to Coalition	32.6	16.1	34.4	21.7	6.2	0.0	2.7	4.0	28.9
From Greens/other to Labor	14.0	31.3	27.6	13.5	23.4	5.9	11.2	1.2	20.7

Source: ANUpoll, April and May 2022

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Table 5   Voting flows – May 2019 to May 2022

May 2022 vote	May 2019 vote			
	Coalition	Labor	Greens	Other
Coalition	29.3	1.8	0.4	0.9
Labor	5.9	25.4	2.2	1.7
Greens	1.5	5.2	11.8	1.0
Other	3.9	2.7	1.3	5.0

Source: ANUpoll, April and May 2022

Table 6   Factors associated with 2019 to 2022 vote switching

Explanatory variables	Party grouping in April 2022					
	All voters		Coalition		Labor	
	Coeff.	Signif.	Coeff.	Signif.	Coeff.	Signif.
Intended to vote Labor in April 2022	-0.079					
Intended to vote Greens in April 2022	-0.207	**				
Intended to vote for other party in April 2022	0.359	***				
Female	0.082		0.077		0.018	
Aged 18 to 24 years	-0.124		-0.192		-0.247	
Aged 25 to 34 years	0.187		0.138		0.283	
Aged 45 to 54 years	-0.080		-0.127		-0.312	*
Aged 55 to 64 years	-0.260	**	-0.241		-0.544	***
Aged 65 to 74 years	-0.235	**	-0.344	*	-0.420	**
Aged 75 years plus	-0.325	**	-0.578	***	-0.646	***
Indigenous	0.235		-0.193		0.427	
Born overseas in a main English-speaking country	0.228	**	0.182		0.124	
Born overseas in a non-English speaking country	0.147		0.140		0.082	
Speaks a language other than English at home	0.069		0.073		-0.158	
Has not completed Year 12 or post-school qualification	-0.227	*	-0.317	*	-0.087	
Has a post graduate degree	0.156		0.236		0.161	
Has an undergraduate degree	0.022		0.100		-0.088	
Has a Certificate III/IV, Diploma or Associate Degree	-0.087		-0.019		-0.274	
Lives in the most disadvantaged areas (1st quintile)	-0.098		-0.120		-0.150	
Lives in next most disadvantaged areas (2nd quintile)	0.015		0.001		0.056	
Lives in next most advantaged areas (4th quintile)	-0.013		-0.013		0.021	
Lives in the most advantaged areas (5th quintile)	0.138		-0.171		0.174	
Lives in another capital city	0.098		-0.139		0.349	***
Lives in lowest income household (1st quintile)	-0.060		0.083		-0.188	
Lives in next lowest income household (2nd quintile)	-0.125		-0.017		-0.161	
Lives in next highest income household (4th quintile)	-0.085		-0.155		-0.239	
Lives in highest income household (5th quintile)	-0.102		-0.054		-0.126	
Constant	-0.487	***	-0.324		-0.316	
Sample size	2,834		1,162		1,043	

Source: ANUpoll, April and May 2022

Notes: Probit Regression Models. The base case individual is male; aged 35 to 44 years; non-Indigenous; born in Australia; does not speak a language other than English at home; has completed Year 12 but does not have a post-graduate degree; lives in neither an advantaged or disadvantaged suburb (third quintile); lives in a capital city; lives in neither a high income or low income household (third quintile). Coefficients that are statistically significant at the 1 per cent level of significance are labelled ***; those significant at the 5 per cent level of significance are labelled **, and those significant at the 10 per cent level of significance are labelled *

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Table 7   Split-ticket voting – House of Representatives and the Senate, May 2022

House of Reps	Senate			
	Coalition	Labor	Greens	Other
Coalition	28.8	1.0	0.7	1.5
Labor	0.9	29.5	3.3	1.6
Greens	0.3	1.6	16.7	1.2
Other	0.8	1.7	1.1	9.3

Source: ANUpoll, May 2022

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Table 8   Factors associated with split-ticket voting, May 2022

Explanatory variables	Coeff.	Signif.
Voted for Labor in the House of Reps	0.249	***
Voted for Greens in the House of Reps	0.240	**
Voted for other party in the House of Reps	0.663	***
Female	-0.033	
Aged 18 to 24 years	0.092	
Aged 25 to 34 years	0.024	
Aged 45 to 54 years	0.030	
Aged 55 to 64 years	0.146	
Aged 65 to 74 years	0.077	
Aged 75 years plus	0.067	
Indigenous	-0.097	
Born overseas in a main English-speaking country	0.019	
Born overseas in a non-English speaking country	0.016	
Speaks a language other than English at home	-0.129	
Has not completed Year 12 or post-school qualification	-0.429	***
Has a post graduate degree	0.197	
Has an undergraduate degree	0.081	
Has a Certificate III/IV, Diploma or Associate Degree	-0.068	
Lives in the most disadvantaged areas (1st quintile)	0.187	
Lives in next most disadvantaged areas (2nd quintile)	0.140	
Lives in next most advantaged areas (4th quintile)	0.064	
Lives in the most advantaged areas (5th quintile)	0.117	
Lives in another capital city	-0.092	
Lives in lowest income household (1st quintile)	0.059	
Lives in next lowest income household (2nd quintile)	-0.106	
Lives in next highest income household (4th quintile)	0.012	
Lives in highest income household (5th quintile)	0.052	
Constant	-1.300	***
Sample size	2,922	

Source: ANUpoll, May 2022

Notes: Probit Regression Models. The base case individual is male; aged 35 to 44 years; non-Indigenous; born in Australia; does not speak a language other than English at home; has completed Year 12 but does not have a post-graduate degree; lives in neither an advantaged or disadvantaged suburb (third quintile); lives in a capital city; lives in neither a high income or low income household (third quintile). Coefficients that are statistically significant at the 1 per cent level of significance are labelled ***; those significant at the 5 per cent level of significance are labelled **, and those significant at the 10 per cent level of significance are labelled *

Endnotes

1 doi:10.26193/AXQPSE

2 Without using population weights, the distribution of votes across the sample is 32.7 per cent voted for the Coalition, 36.2 per cent voted for Labor, 17.7 per cent voted for the Greens, and 13.4 per cent voted for another party or independent.

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