

THE MILLENNIAL DIALOGUE

Australia



Methodology

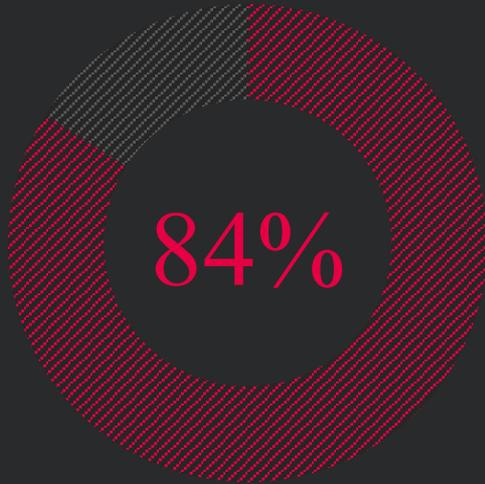
AudienceNet conducted an initial online survey amongst 1,073 (weighted total 1,008) 16-35 year old Australian residents and a week-long, moderated, online dialogue with approximately 40 Australian Millennials, segmented as follows: the politically engaged; the mainstream and the politically disaffected.

The sample was recruited to be nationally representative of all Australian Millennials in terms of: age; geographical region; household income and educational attainment levels.

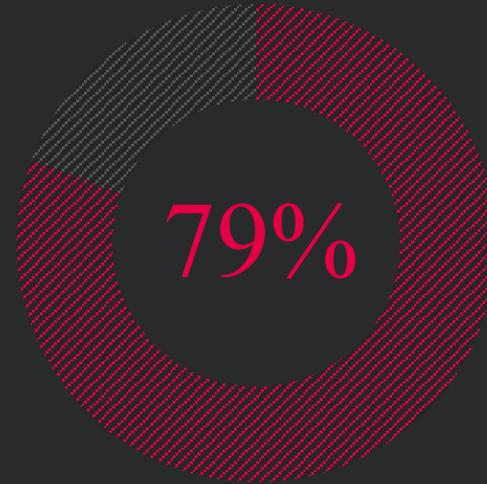
Interest & engagement with politics



Most young people in Australia are happy and optimistic...



Are generally happy
with their lives

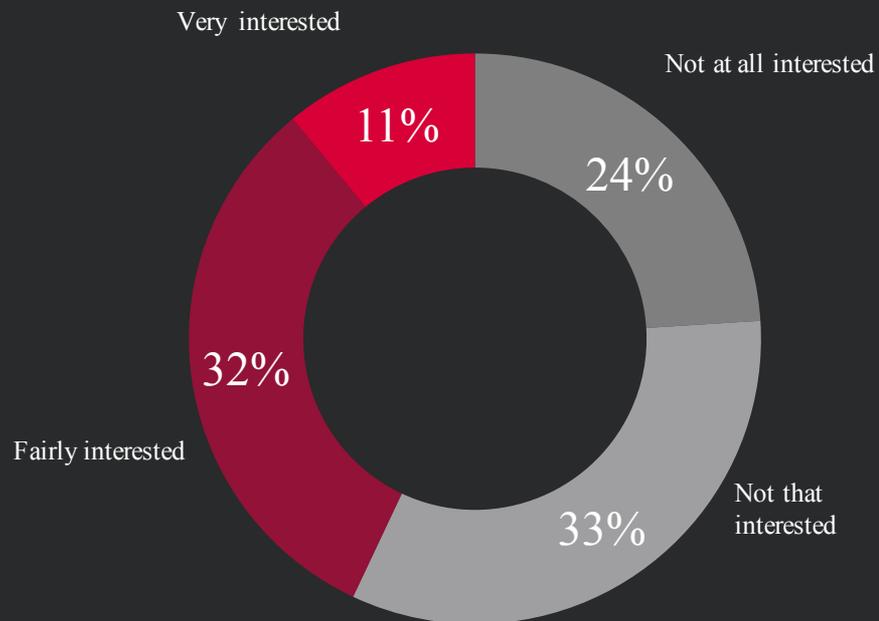


Are optimistic about
their future

Q: Taking all things into consideration, how happy are you with your life right now? BASE: 1,008

Q: Looking to the future and the things you might like to do and achieve in life, how positive/optimistic are you that you will get what you hope for? BASE: 1,008

...But interest in politics is low

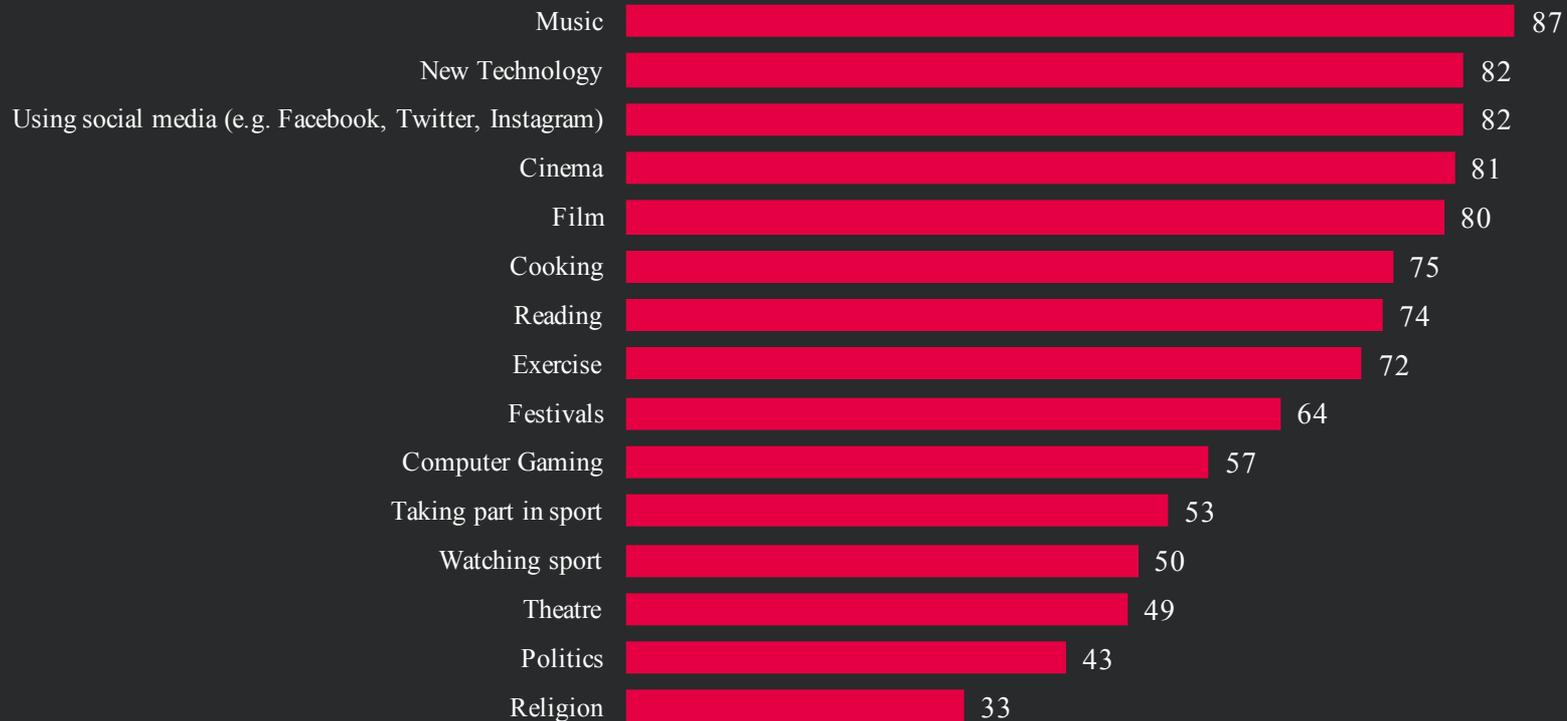


11%
said they were “very interested” in politics

Q: How interested are you in each of the following? – Politics BASE: 1,008

Music & film top the list of interests

(Net %: very interested / fairly interested)



Q: How interested are you in each of the following? BASE: 1,008

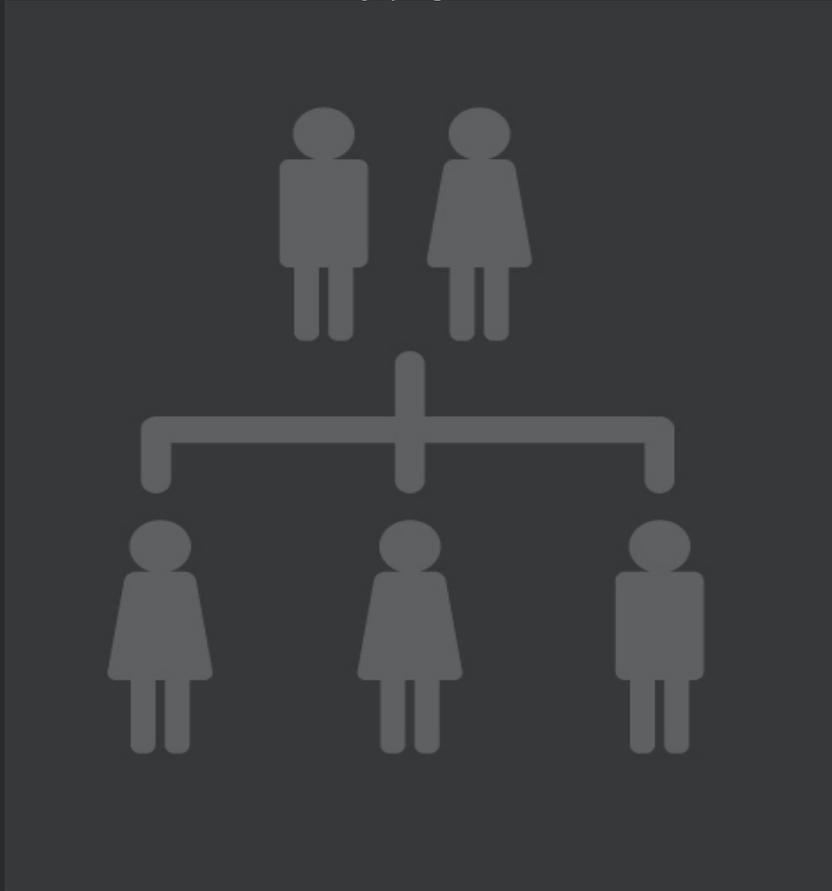
Taking an interest in politics is also not considered to be important

(Rank in order of importance)

1	Being in good health	10	Equality in society
2	Being happy	11	Being Successful
3	Having leisure time	12	Contributing to society
4	Being free to do and say what I want	13	Having my voice heard
5	Spending time with friends	14	Taking an interest in music
6	Spending time with family	15	Being connected to friends via social media
7	Helping others	16	Being involved with my local community
8	The well-being of society in general	17	Taking an interest in politics
9	Making money		

Q: How important to you personally are each of the following? BASE: 1,008

Generation gap



45%

feel that their generation is less interested in politics than their parents' or grandparents' generation

20% think the reverse

Q: Compared to your parents' and grandparents' generation, to what extent do you think people of your age are interested in politics? BASE: 1,008

Why are so few young people interested in politics?

When asked why their generation was less interested in politics they believed that politicians made too many empty promises and they felt powerless to influence any changes.

“They [politicians] take back promises they've made to help younger people, they have specifically shown that they think the younger generation have it 'easy' with the proposal of deregulation of university fees as well as keeping negative gearing around.”

“I believe that the reason that so few young people are interested in politics is because they believe that their opinions and their voice won't influence any changes.”

“Because politicians are too vague. They come up with slogans or use weasel words. Few people can trust them to deliver what they say they will deliver.”

“I think young people don't trust politicians because they don't often do what they say. There have been too many recent cases of politicians back-flipping on their promises, and have called into question their integrity.”

”I think they're [politicians] are all the same. You feel like you can't trust what they say or promise you so many of the younger generation probably don't know who to vote in in fear of making a mistake.”

“I'm not that interested in politics. In my opinion the public don't have a say in what happens so no need for me to become interested.”

Why are so few young people interested in politics? (Cont.)

Others argued that young people were less interested in politics because they don't know enough about politics. On the other hand some thought politicians cared more about their own interests and the interests of older people than those of young people.

I think the reason why so few young people are interested in politics is because they don't have the level of understanding required to gauge where Australia is now and where it is likely to be headed. Most young people are only concerned with the here and now and find it difficult to think more than a few years ahead. Another reason why I think young people don't take much interest in politics is because all the political parties members do is fight and criticise each others policies and views. As a result nobody ever gets close to making a decision.”

“I'm kind of interested in politics, but I find it hard to get really into the subject because there's a lot of stuff I don't understand or know about how the political system in Australia works.”

“I think politicians don't really want to hear what young people say, because what we want is change and progression, along with good leadership, something that does not happen in this country by either party.”

“They [politicians] are all about self interest, not really the people/public.”

“Many people my age want to be able to do things about these issues but feel powerless as it often feels like we're the minority. It feels like a lot of the time decisions surrounding these issues are decided by people who are not from our generation which have different views and so there's that automatic feeling that we can't have in power in those decisions”

Taking part

5% said that they have attended a political meeting compared to 9% who said that they have taken part in a protest/demonstration

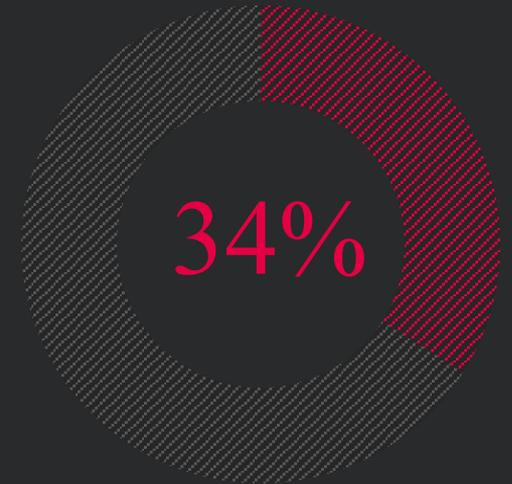
5%

Take part in
political meetings

9%

Take part in
protests/demonstrations

This compares to 15% who
take part in religious
meetings/events and...



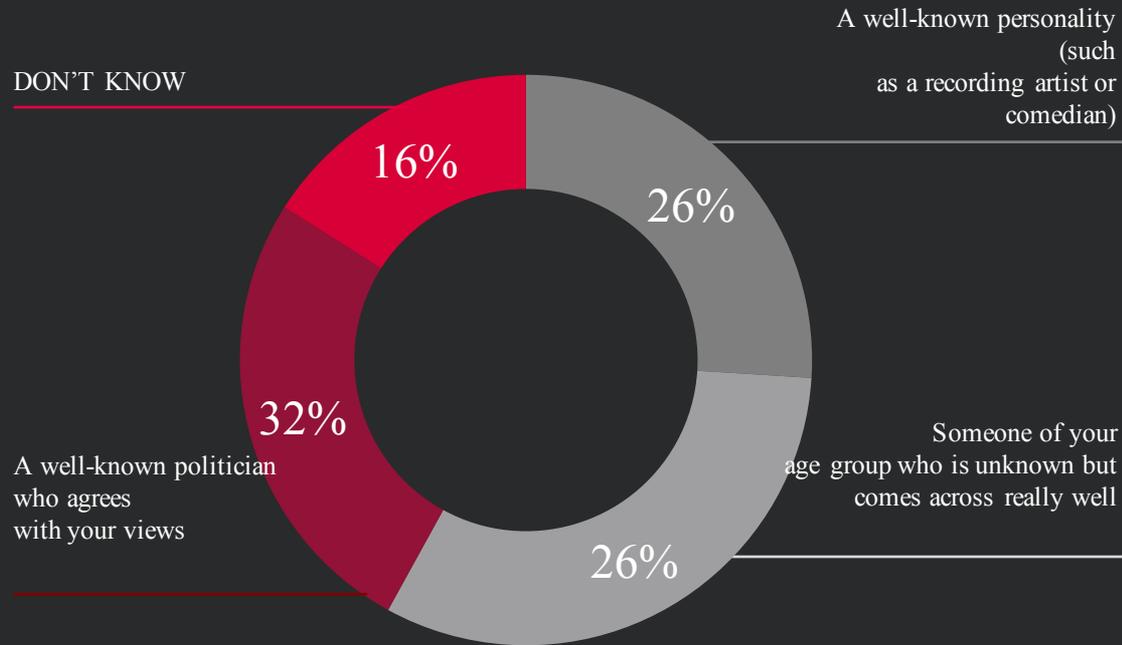
who take part in
team sports

Q: Which, if any, of the following do you sometimes take part in? BASE: 1,008

Politicians connecting with young people



Who should run the campaign?



Q: Who would you prefer to lead a campaign that you really cared about? BASE: 1,008

13%

felt confident that they and their peers could make themselves heard

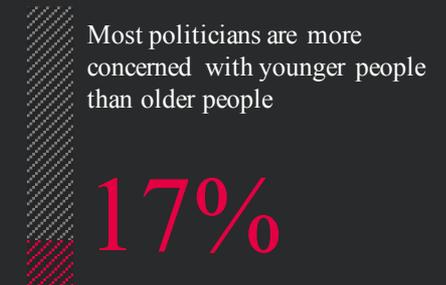
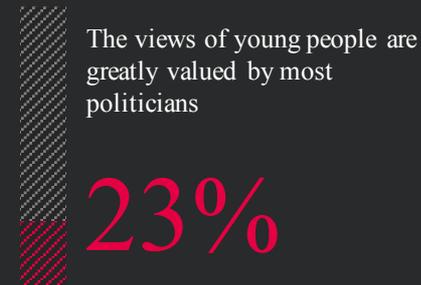
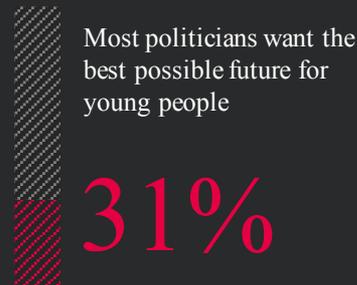
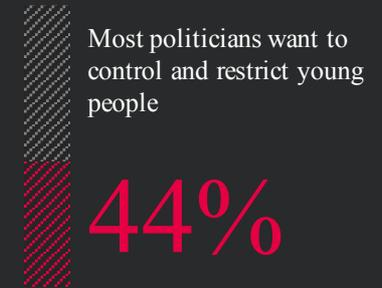
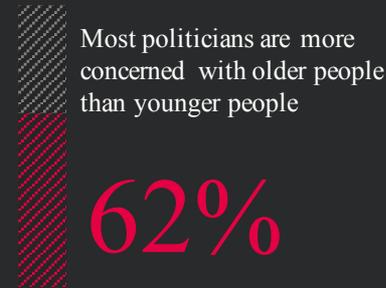
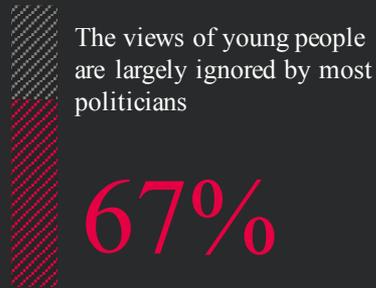
50%

think very few, if any, politicians encourage young people to get involved in politics

Q: Thinking of any particular issue that you and/or your friends might have strong views about, to what extent do you feel that your voice can be heard and listened to? BASE: 1,008
Q: Which of the following statements best describes the relationship between existing politicians in Australia and the extent to which people of your age group get involved in politics? BASE: 1,008

% agreeing with statements

67% of Australian millennials think that politicians ignore the views of young people.



Q: To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? BASE: 1,008

Looking to the future...



Factors affecting future quality of life

(‘Very big affect’ or ‘some affect’ %)

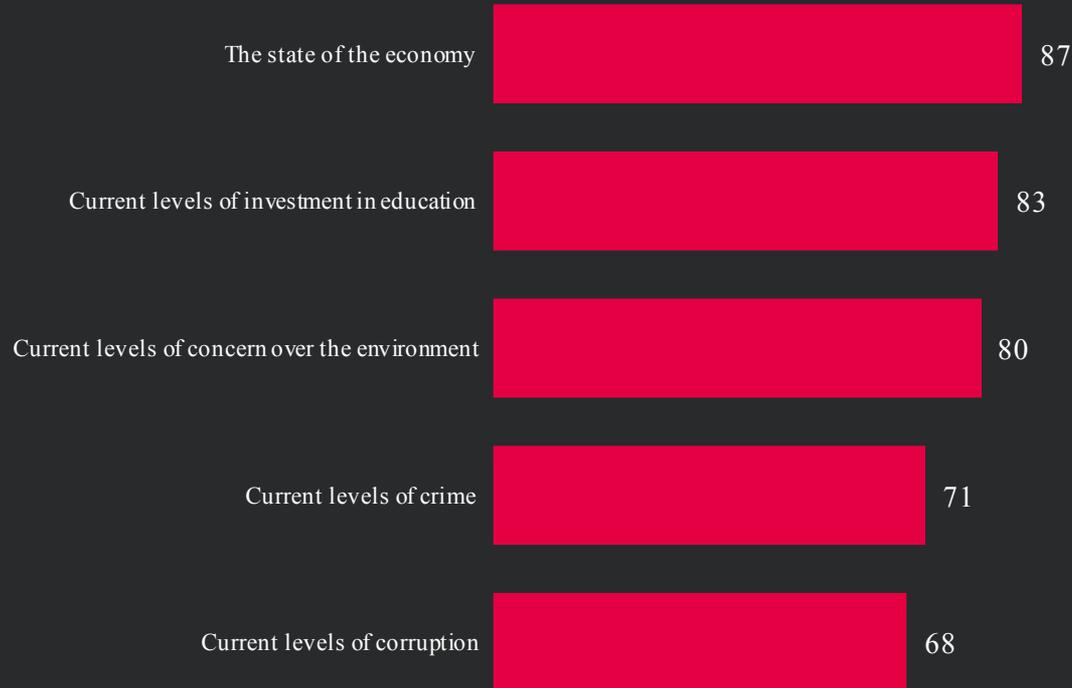


Millennials think “the national economic situation” will be the top factor influencing their future quality of life.

Q: To what extent do you believe that each of the following will affect your future and the quality of your life? BASE: 1,008

What they think will damage their future

(‘Great extent’ or ‘some extent’ %)



Millennials think “the state of the economy” will be the most damaging to their future.

Q: To what extent do you think that the following are damaging the future for young people in Australia? BASE: 1,008



81%

believed in the importance of equality
of sexual orientation in society

Q: To what extent do you tend to agree or disagree with each of the following statements? - Our society should accept people of all sexual orientations equally BASE: 1,008

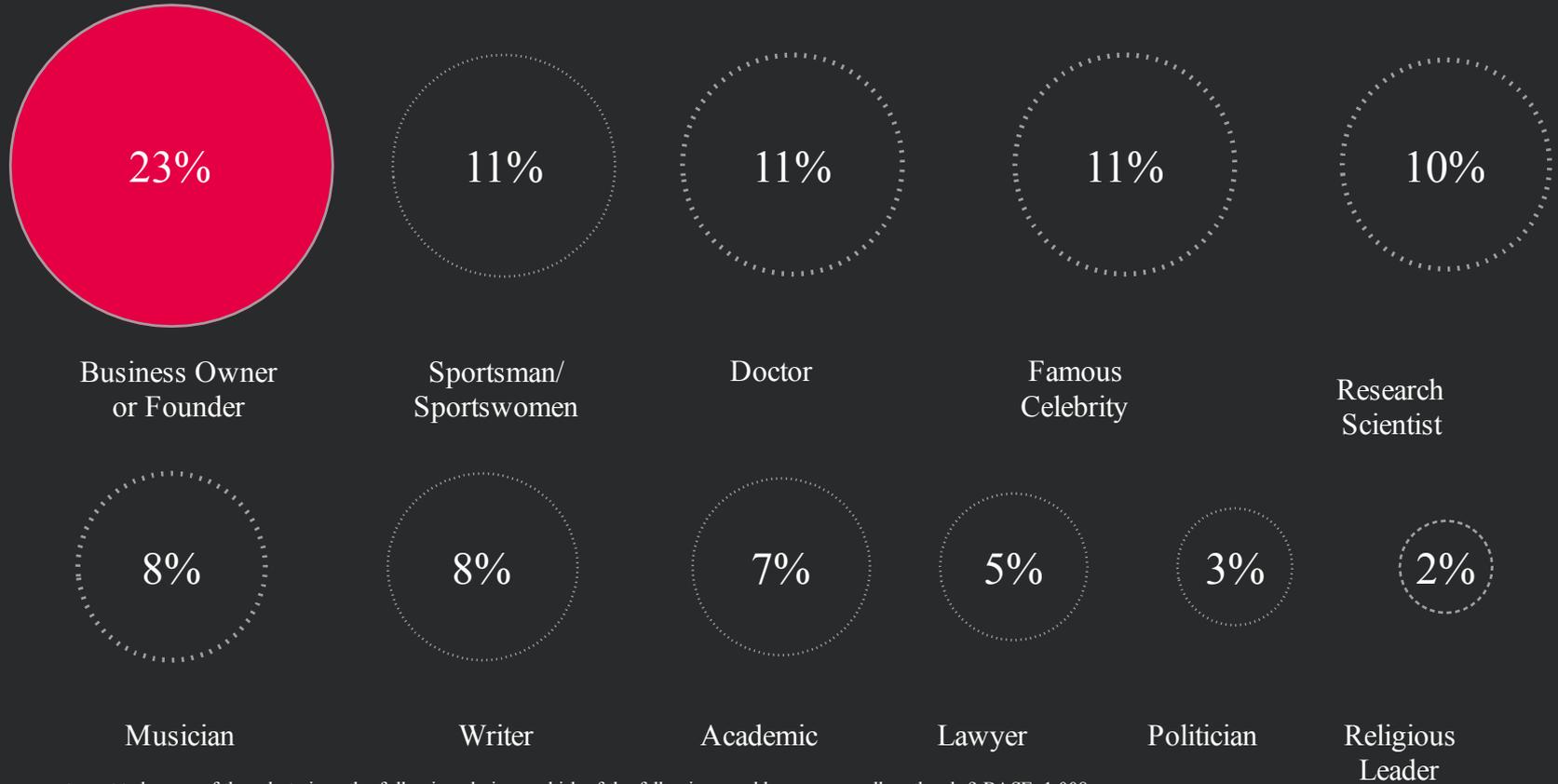


85%

believed in the importance of equality
for all genders in society

Q: To what extent do you tend to agree or disagree with each of the following statements? - Our society should accept people of all genders equally BASE: 1,008

What would they rather be?



Q: You may not want to be any of them but given the following choices, which of the following would you personally rather be? BASE: 1,008

Time Travel Activity | **their own future**

The participants were asked to imagine that they could travel 20-30 years in to the future and describe what they think their lives would be like. Whilst some found it difficult to predict their future, most hoped to have a successful career and a healthy work life balance.

“In 20-30 years time I see myself raising a family and working on a business that keeps me happy. I would like to think the country becomes more progressive in its thinking, with less homelessness and mental health issues. I'd also like to see people being healthier with more modest physiques.”

“I'd be happily married with my wife and have a second child and both have grown into good, responsible adults and good people. Cost of living wouldn't be ridiculous and I would be thinking about retirement.”

“I would be a middle aged man with a family, writing books and hopefully living far from the city.”

“I would be retired spending time with my family and hopefully have grandchildren.”

Time Travel Activity | Australia

When asked what the country might be like in 20-30 years time, millennials were divided. Most believed that Australia would be more technologically advanced, some predicting that this would lead to a more entrepreneurial society. Some had a bleak outlook on future living conditions.

“I see Australia being more technologically advanced and innovative. No longer dependent upon mining, but be a thriving economy that is welcoming to start ups and innovation. Australia will be even more multicultural, but still embrace the 'helpout your neighbour' attitude.”

“The main changes would have been caused by the rise in scientific technology, people becoming more technologically savvy, innovative and entrepreneurial.”

“I think Australia will be a very different place. The Australian dollar will be worth much less than it is now, and the cities (especially Melbourne and Sydney) will be very populous and polluted. ”

“Cities will become over-crowded as people are forced out of regional areas. The gap between rich or poor will increase.”

Time Travel Activity | Government

When we asked what the government might be like in 20-30 years time, the majority of young people thought elections would take place online. Some young Australians were pessimistic about how the government would look in 20-30 years, but most hoped for positive change.

“The government would have to become more social media savvy as this is the way that they will be campaigning. They will no longer be pounding the pavement, but they still will be doing radio and TV interviews, but from the comfort of their own homes.”

“Government would be more representative of actual society not the 1% and voting would have changed to an online option years ago.”

“Well hopefully, the government has a larger variety of people than white men, including more representatives from all minorities, this will give a fairer look at the overall population in Australia and wider understanding of the on goings within our country. This is the main change I would really like to see, also a really strong push for renewable energy, the only people current energy sources are benefitting are those already have most of the wealth in the this country and around the world.”

“I think things will be much the same as what they are now.”

”I think the government will very much be the same, as the past has shown very little changes in structure.”

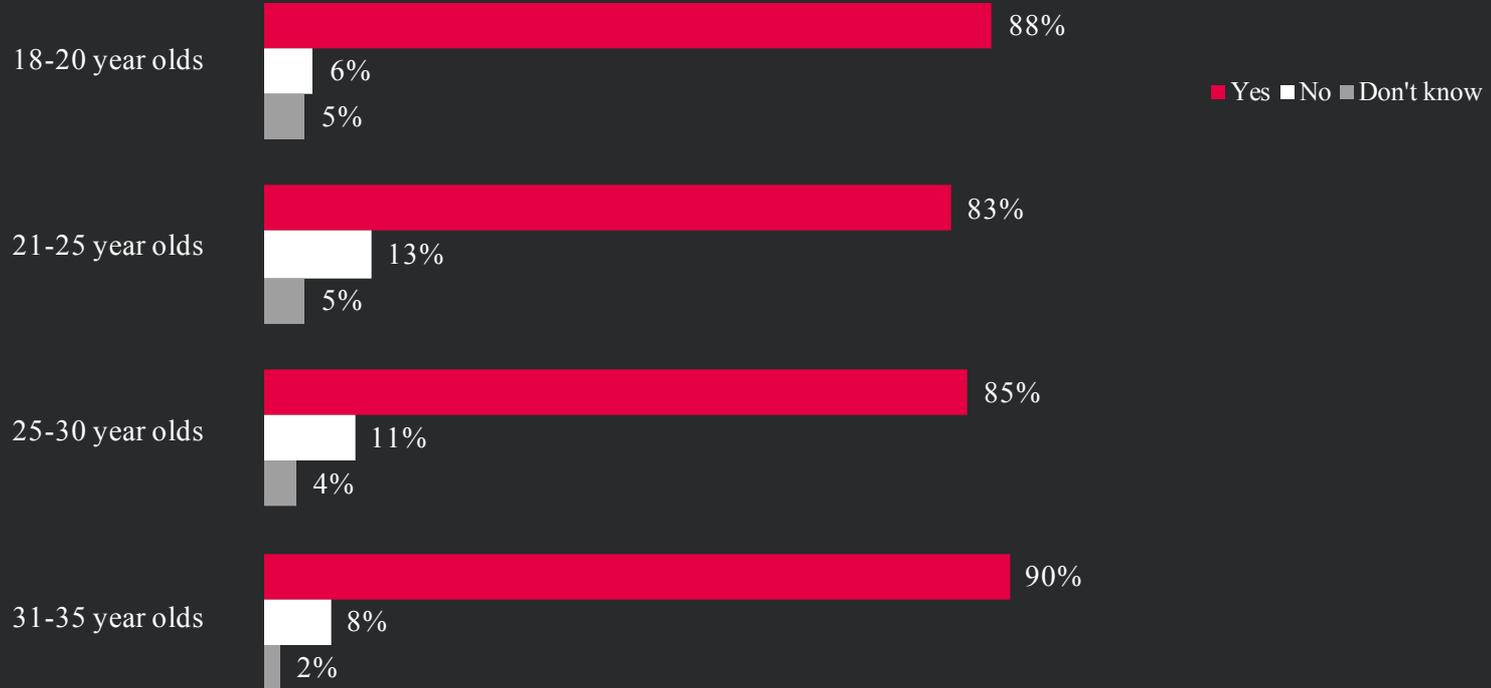
“I honestly feel like there will not be much left because of the current political parties. We will be driven into the ground and will no longer be the lucky country called Australia.”

Voting



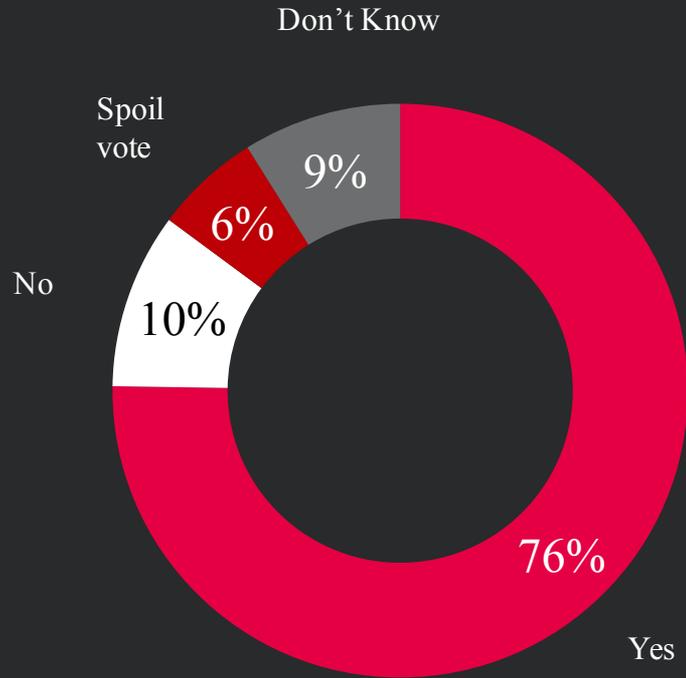
Are you enrolled to vote?

(% who agree with each statement)



Q: Are you enrolled to vote? BASE: All above the age of 18 years 905

If there was an election tomorrow would you vote?



79%

Of those with a university education would vote

Q: If there was an election tomorrow would you vote? BASE: 1,008

Key reasons for not wanting to vote

1

Lack of trust in politicians

2

They have no interest in politics

3

They don't think they know enough about politics

4

They don't think their vote would make a difference

5

They don't support the current political system

Q: What makes you not want to vote? BASE All who would not vote: 96

Key factors that might encourage an interest in voting

#1

If I trusted politicians more

#2

If my vote really made a difference

Q: Which, if any of the following, might make you more interested in voting? BASE: All who would not vote 96

Why politicians aren't trusted

When asked to name a politician they trusted, the majority of Australian millennials said they did not trust any politicians. The reasons for not trusting politicians were that politicians have broken too many promises. Those who did mention politicians mentioned, Bernie Sanders, Obama, Nelson Mandela, Dan Tehan and Andrew Wilkie

“Bernie Sanders (US) appears to be a genuine and trustworthy politician. Unlike other candidates, Sanders has maintained his beliefs throughout his political career rather than adapt them to suit what the majority of voters want.”

“We don't trust politicians mainly because there is no accountability for what they say or promise, especially during their scummy election campaigns.”

“Politicians on both sides seem to thrive on fear and distrust. They play to these emotions in order to win votes because it's easy--in the short-term. But the long-term goals, dreams and opinions of the public can be permanently damaged by such opinions.”

“I consider Andrew Wilkie as the bar that other politicians should lift themselves up to. He has the mixture of competence and trustworthiness that I would like to see more of in parliament.”

”I genuinely feel pretty disgusted with politics as a whole these days. All talk to get the votes, but once they're in office - nada, zilch, zip. And that's all parties.”

“Past failures of policies can leave voters confused and angry leading to mistrust of politicians.”

Building trust in politics

For Australian millennials, trust was seen as something that needed to be earned by politicians by interacting with and listening to the younger generations and keeping their election promises. Some wanted a governing body that held politicians accountable for their promises.

“The best way for them to win people's trust is to actually be honest and stick to the promises they make.”

“Politicians could better connect with young people and earn their trust by simply becoming more connected with local communities, and by keeping their campaign/party stance transparent, and by delivering on their promises. Less slandering of the other parties, more discussion about how to improve the country.”

“Politicians can connect better with young people using social media.”

“How could politicians better connect with younger people and win their trust? This is a tough question. I feel it needs to start before we are given the ability to vote, since I have been able to vote I haven't really had an idea what the politicians have been saying and promising. I wish I was given an education on it during high school, so I would say education.”

“If there was some sort of governing body within politics that could block a PM from acting against their promises then that would force politicians to be less manipulative. You can't even trust the trustworthy ones (and I can't think of any) for that matter either, you just don't know what is a lie.”

Factors contributing to voting decision

(% 'Great Extent' or 'Some Extent')



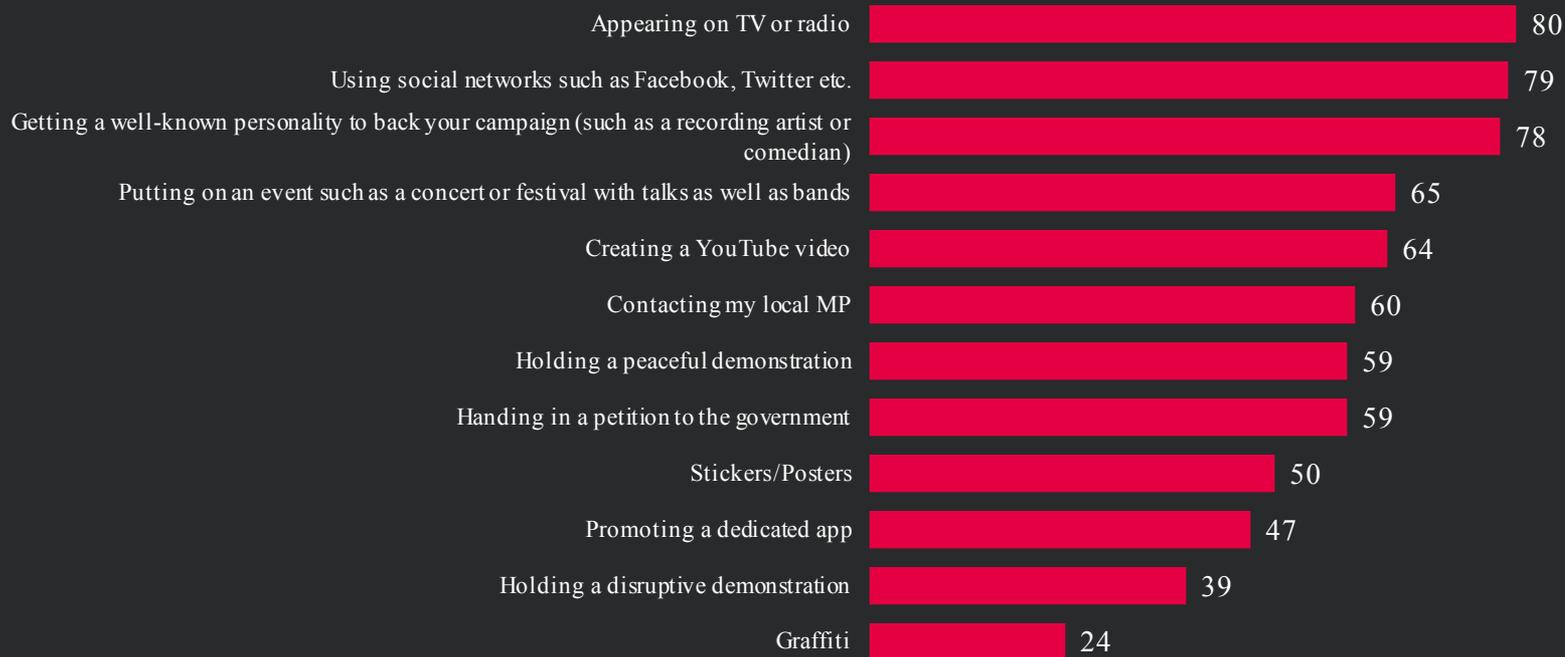
Views about the leaders of each party was seen as the key factor. Social media and other online factors were fairly low down the list as millennials expect the main campaigns to take place using traditional media (TV and radio).

Q: If you did vote tomorrow, to what extent do you think each of the following factors would contribute to your decision as to who to vote for? BASE: 1,008

Means they would use to start a political campaign

(NET % 'extremely useful' and 'fairly useful')

If they were to start their own campaign, however, Australian millennials would be more likely to focus their efforts on social media



Q: If you and/or your friends wanted to start a campaign to bring about change, to what extent would each of the following be useful? BASE: 1,008

Preferred message for encouraging more younger people to vote...

43%

“ Younger people need to vote - it's their future ”

35%

“ Voting really does make a difference ”

21%

“ Voting is your responsibility ”

Q: Which of the following messages do you think would be the best for encouraging young people to vote? BASE: 1,008

What would they do differently?

If Australian millennials were to start their own political campaign, they would focus on single issues, such as employment, education, equality or health. They greatly emphasised the importance of demonstrating their trustworthiness. They would try to engage and involve citizens in their campaign by listening to their views and utilising social media.

“My campaign would focus on issues such as unemployment, equality, healthcare and international aid. I would campaign mainly by focusing on all the things good about my own campaign rather than focusing on the negative things of other parties.”

“My campaign would be centered around the NBN - something all young people were in favour of, and that many large corporations were against.”

“I would connect with people in a human way - I would try to sell myself and my policies with a more personal touch. I would place emphasis on honesty and trust.”

“My campaign wouldn't work around 'talking' about changing the issue, but to actually lead by example. Treating others and standing up for others who are in minorities doesn't cost anyone a thing.”

“I feel that through social media I can get people from all different backgrounds who are passionate and engaged in a sole topic.”

“I would campaign them through social media mainly and getting out there on the streets.”

“If I made a campaign it would be about same sex marriage. I would connect more on social media as the topic is something everyone understands and is more popular in the younger generations who use technology often.”

Poster Campaign

The respondents were asked to work together to develop ideas for posters that would encourage young people to get engaged in politics. For their posters they would use everyday language and try to restore hope to the public. Many said they would avoid scare tactics and keep their poster positive.

“I would use emotive but positive language.”

“I would use simple language - politics itself may be a convoluted subject, but everyone should be able to engage in the poster and extract meaningful information from it.”

“I would use inspirational and vision casting words in the headline of the poster. I think we all dream of a better future in some way or another. So designing a poster that would inspire is very important to me. The headline could be something emotive, such as "My home, my community my country". The poster could include a picture of what my ideal future could look like, including beautiful scenery, amazing technology, happy families, and adventure.”

A few suggestions for a poster title:

“Real politicians for real Australians”

“Real. Change. Now.”

“Your votes. Your future.”

The ‘ideal’ candidate

When we asked who their ideal candidate was, many said that gender and clothing didn't matter, although some millennials did say they would like to see more female politicians. Most wanted their candidate to be between 30-50 and to be “down to earth” and empathetic.

“When I think of the ideal candidate they will be male, aged from mid 40s to late 50s. What people would value about this person is he is like them. He has a family to support mortgage to pay off and knows how to manage money without going into debt, although this may be something he has experienced in the past. People want somebody who knows what the average family goes through and the problems that they face. People want to put somebody in parliament who will make the necessary changes so that people are able to live a better quality of life.”

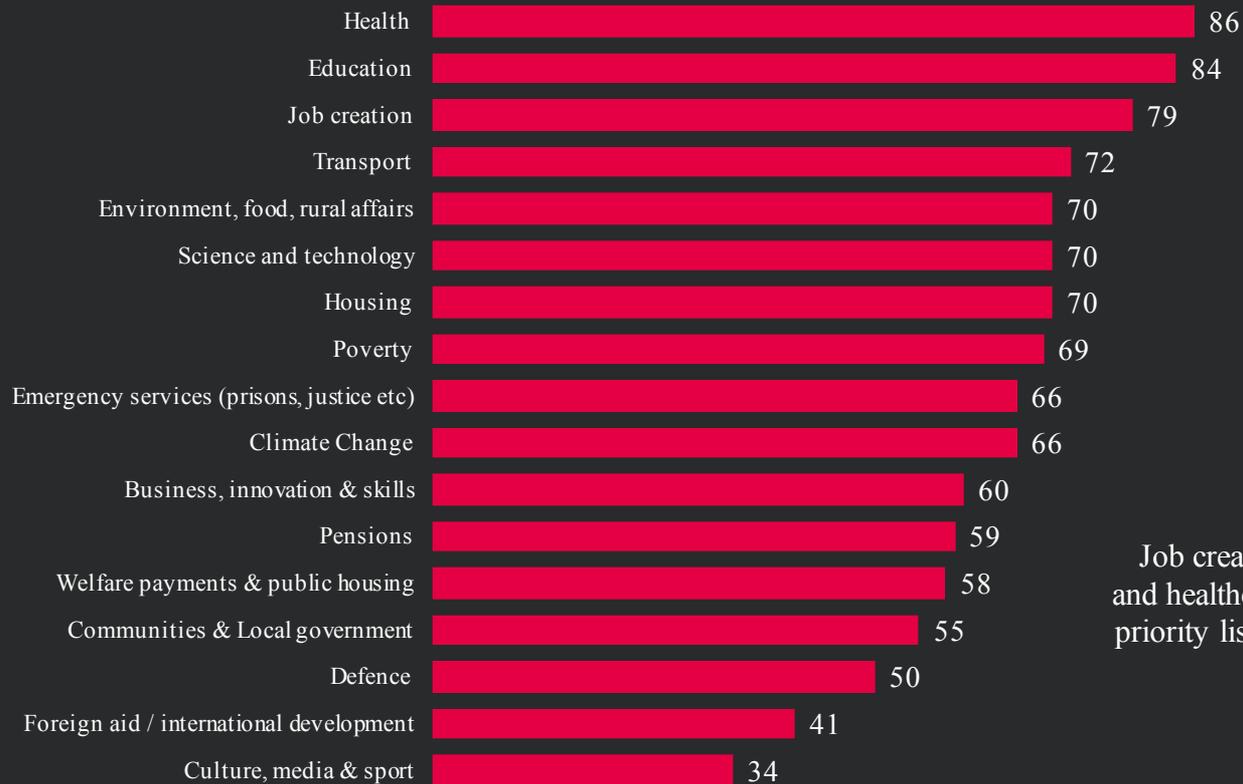
“Gender?
30 -35, Living anywhere, trousers and shirt, doing volunteer work and visiting community services men's shed and community gardens, down to earth friendly understanding passionate willing to make changes trustworthy reliable, seen as a leader, I cannot see any weaknesses with this person, except maybe not appealing top the wealthy.”

Female, aged between 40 - 50, living in a middle income suburb of a major city, wearing what she feels comfortable in (irrelevant to skills or potential) with a friendly and understanding personality. The person would spend their weekends relaxing with their family and friends and maybe supporting some charitable causes. People will value their friendly personality and their ability to understand and empathise. They should be able to speak their mind freely and accurately represent the feelings of the people in their electorate.”

The issues that matter



High Priority for Public Spending (%)



Job creation, education and healthcare topped the priority list for Australian millennials.

Q: Imagine that you were in government, how much priority would you place on each of the following areas? BASE: 1,008

WHAT SHOULD POLITICIANS WORK TOWARDS? (%)

To what extent do they deliver on the following? (%)



Q: As stated above BASE: 1,008

The issues that matter

When asked to talk about which issues were they had been discussing most in recent times, the main topics to emerge were youth unemployment, same-sex marriage, healthcare and the environment.

”Politicians should focus on creating job opportunities and promoting new sectors of emerging industries so that young people have the necessary skills to succeed in these positions. These are the jobs of the future and we need to develop training programs to keep up with an ever changing jobs landscape.”

“Issues many people my age (early 20's) care about are often environmentally focused, because within the Architectural field there is a huge push for green design. LGBTQ rights are also extremely important, especially considering how backwards are outdated our current laws are, as most of the policies are governed by much older and more conservative members of parliament.”

“Healthcare. Although we currently have a great system in place, it seems as though it is in a bit of danger with all the rumors of medicare cuts and lower funding for hospitals. Often I find people only ever fighting for things they don't have, but in this situation we should definitely be fighting to protect something we currently have, currently need, and currently benefit from.”

The issues that matter

There were several other issues young people thought politicians should focus on such as education and housing. Another issue of concern was human rights e.g. asylum rights. Some also discussed the rights of Aboriginal communities.

“Education is important because without education then young people cannot get a job because all employers want people who have completed high school at the very least. In other circumstances employers want job seekers who have been to TAFE or university. In order for this to happen then higher education needs to become more affordable. As it is, we live in a society where innovation is everything and in order for people to be innovative they need to have the educational background behind them to make innovative ideas become a reality. So based on this fact, higher education needs to be more affordable so that students are able to pay off HECS debt.”

“The main issue that I would like to see addressed is housing affordability. If it wasn't for superannuation there wouldn't be a cent in the Australian stock market because our entire investment culture is completely centered around property speculation.”

“I think the main issue we should be focusing on is the treatment of asylum seekers. The way Australia treats them is inhumane and criminal and needs to be stopped. A lot of people my age care about this issue.”

“Aboriginal people will hopefully be living in better conditions and given many more opportunities.”

Politicians/Political parties



Influences in day-to-day life

Please rank the following in terms of how much you feel they influence choices and decisions you make in your day-to-day life.

1 Being in good health

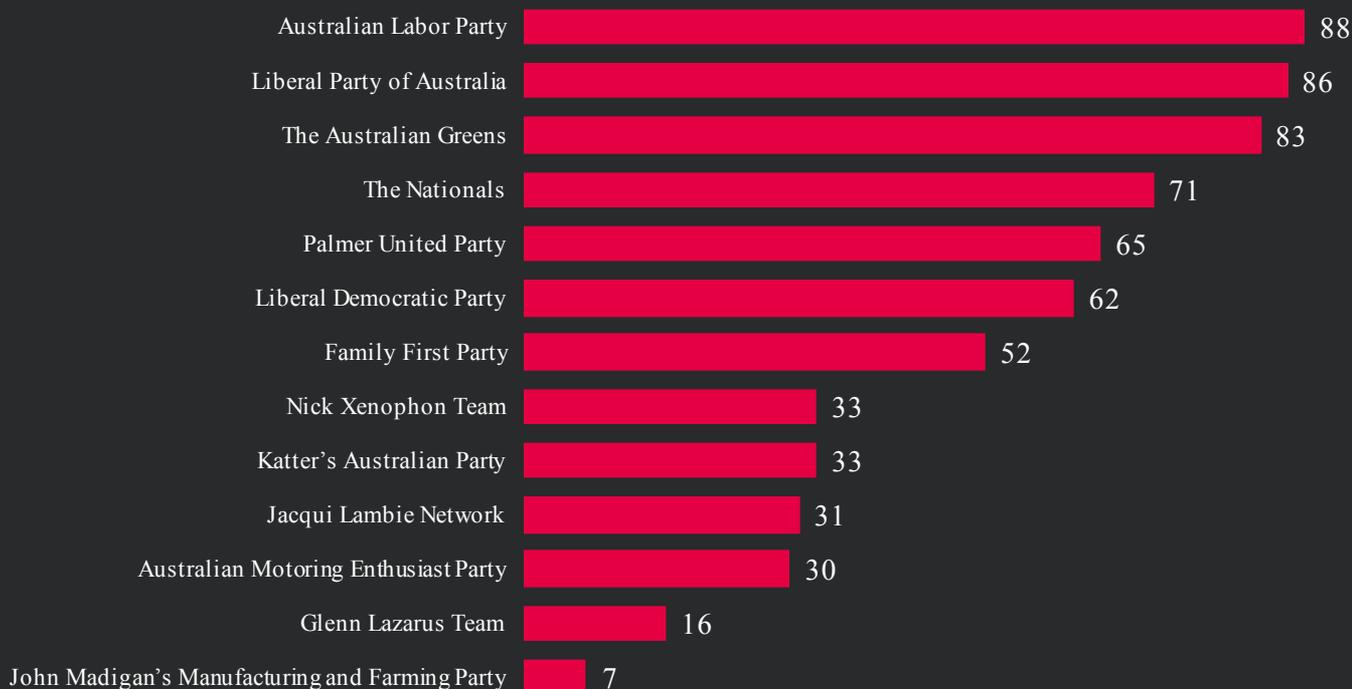
2 Being happy

3 Having leisure time

4 Being free to do and say what I want

5 Spending time with friends

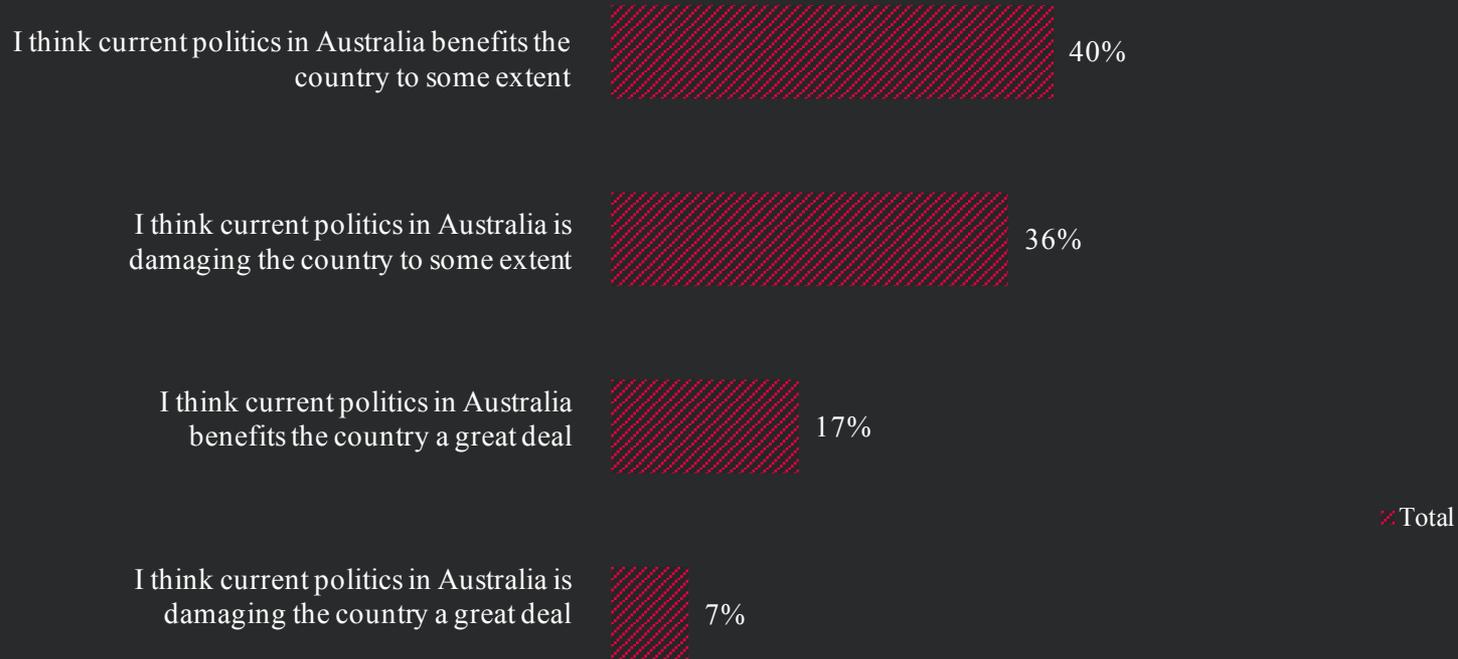
Awareness of political parties (%)



Awareness was relatively high for all the top parties

Q: Which, if any, of the following political parties are you aware of? BASE: 1,008

To what extent do current party politics in Australia benefits the country as a whole?



Q: To what extent do you feel each of the following factors would encourage more people of your age to vote? BASE: 1,008

Write a letter to your local mp

Dear MP,

I am writing to you today in regards to your party's current policy and recent history regarding Medicare. As an Australian who relies on Medicare for my essential health services, I value Medicare as a right to all Australians due to my family having ALWAYS paid their fair share of tax for such a system.

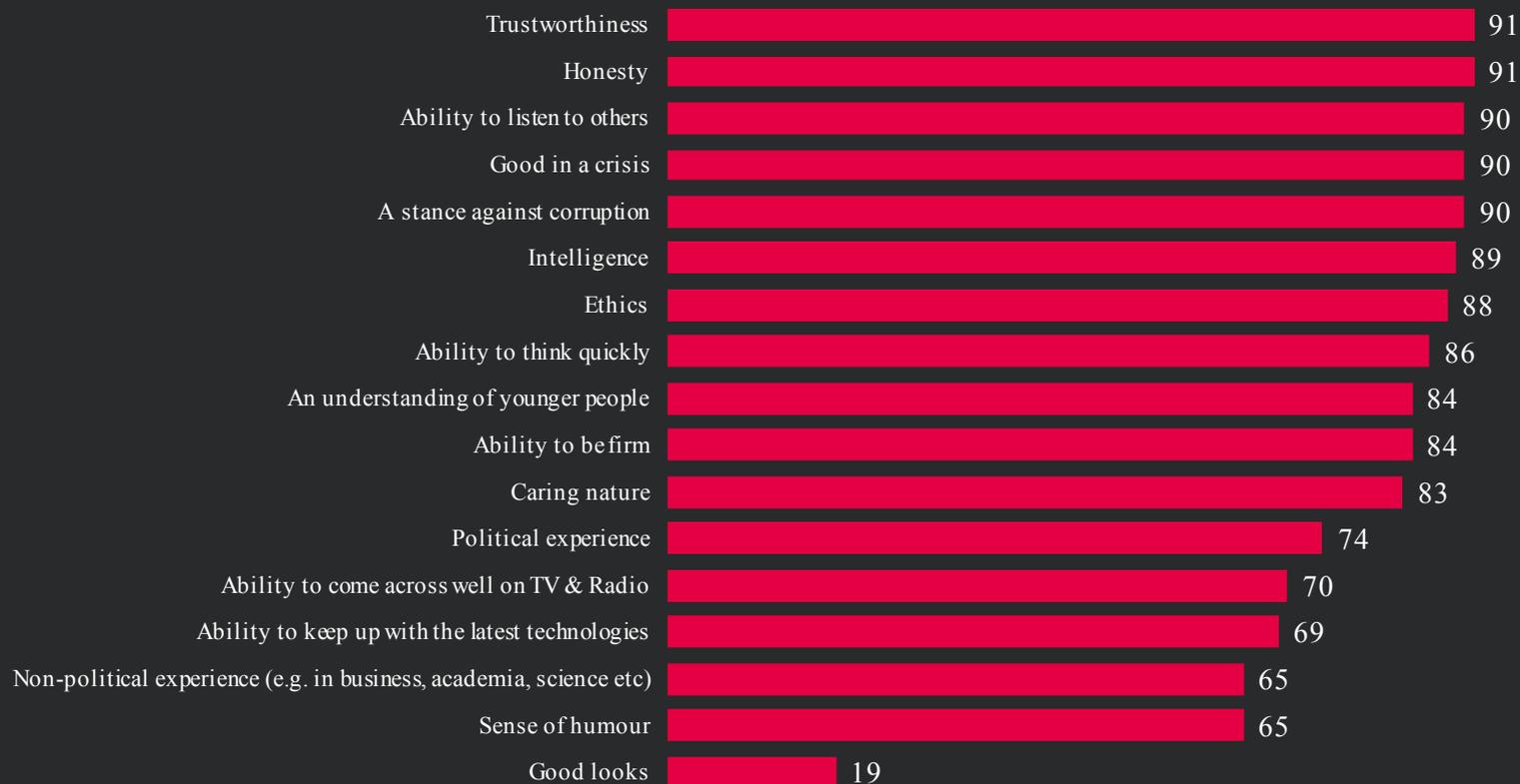
Considering recent developments such as the Commission of Audit Report as well as proposition for a GP co-payment, how is it that you honestly believe ordinary Australians will trust you with our health system? Every chance you are given, you defend yourselves, hand on heart, horrified at the idea that someone suggest you will cut funding to health services or change Medicare. Yet the last time we saw a clear and absolute promise from Tony Abbott of 'no cuts to health' and nevertheless, once given power, cuts undeniably occurred.

When voting in the Federal Election, I vote for people I know and for people I don't. There are people who depend on Medicare more than me - for subsidised medications through the PBS, for live-saving surgeries that they couldn't afford otherwise and for regular treatment which enable them to live their lives healthily and happily.

The fact that people are even suggesting that you are thinking of privatisation sends the Australian people a message, regardless of whether you deny it or not. Your party are not to be trusted with Medicare.



Important qualities for an elected politician (%)



Q: How important should it be for an elected politician to possess each of the following qualities? BASE: 1,008

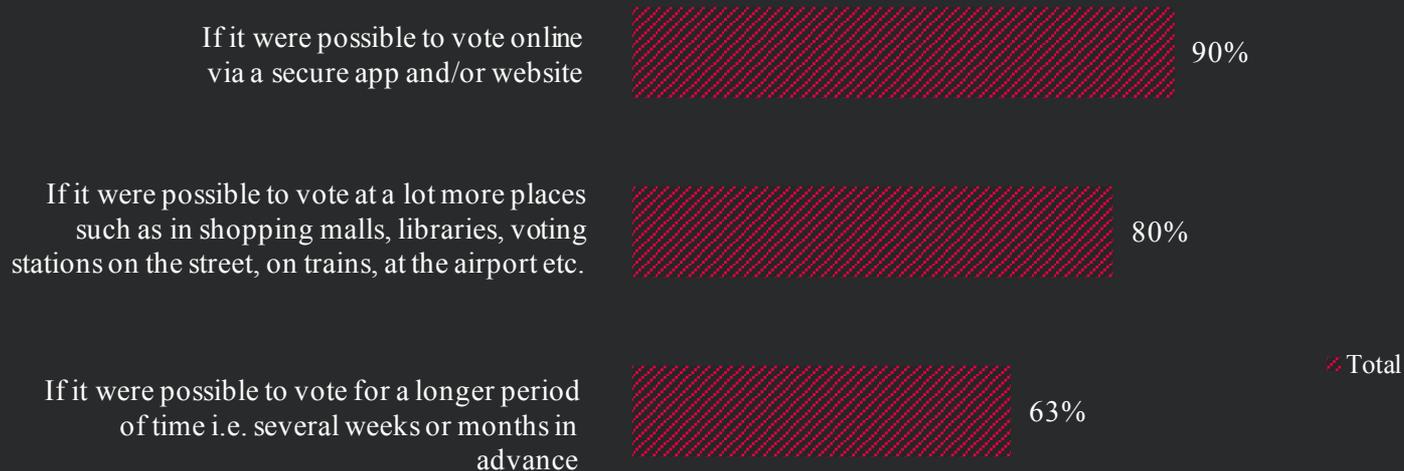
Electoral reform



What would encourage more people to vote?

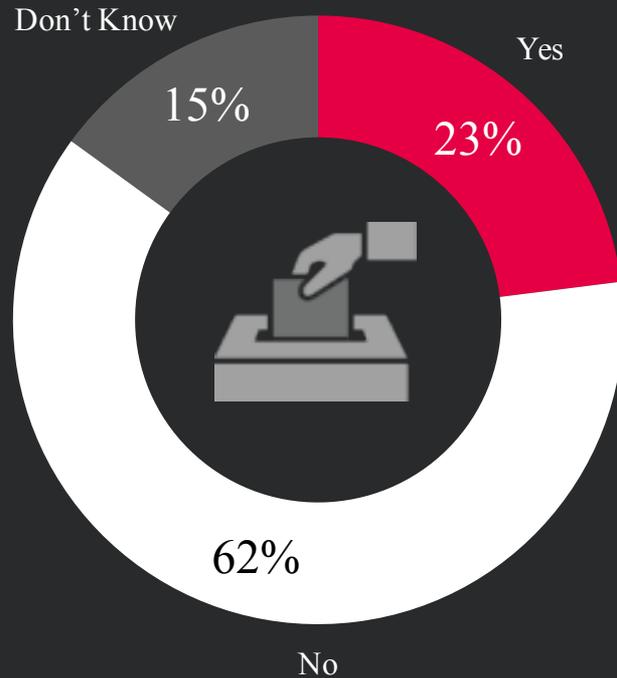
(% 'Very significantly encourage...' or 'Would go some way to encouraging...')

Young Australian people show great confidence in the power of connected technology and online voting to increase participation. There is also substantial support for extending the locations where one can vote and some minor support for prolonging elections.



Q: To what extent do you feel each of the following factors would encourage more people of your age to vote? BASE: 1,008

Should 16 and 17 year olds be given the opportunity to vote?



31%

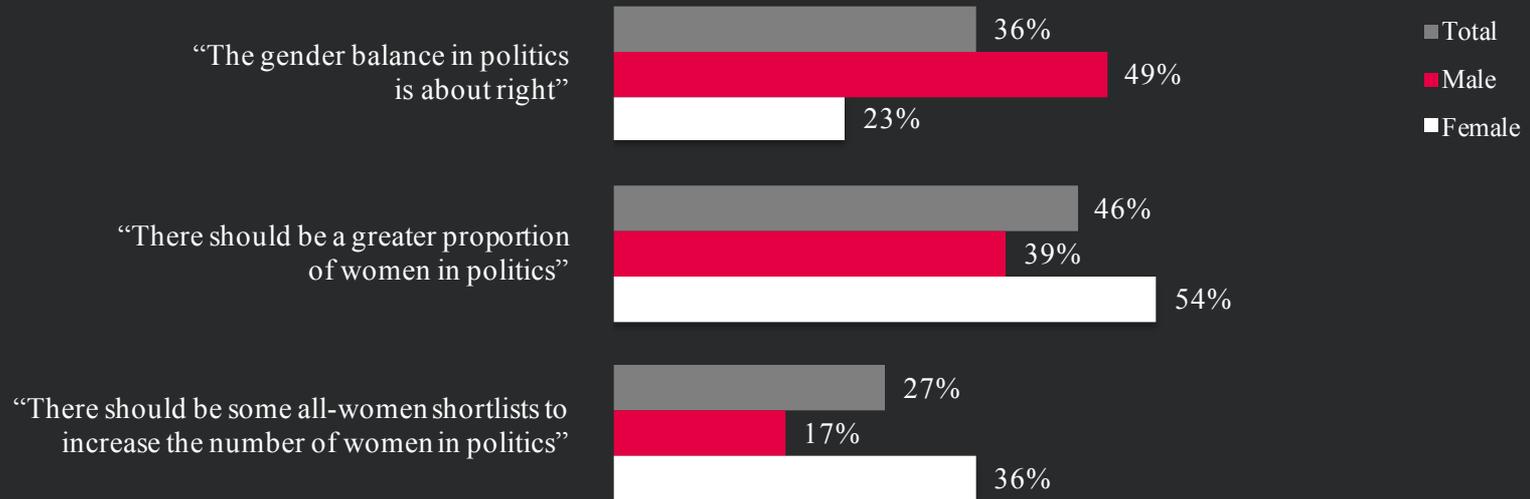
Of those aged 16-20 said “yes” – 16 and 17 year olds should be given the opportunity to vote

Q: Do you think that 16 and 17 year olds should be given the opportunity to vote? BASE: 1,008

Women in politics

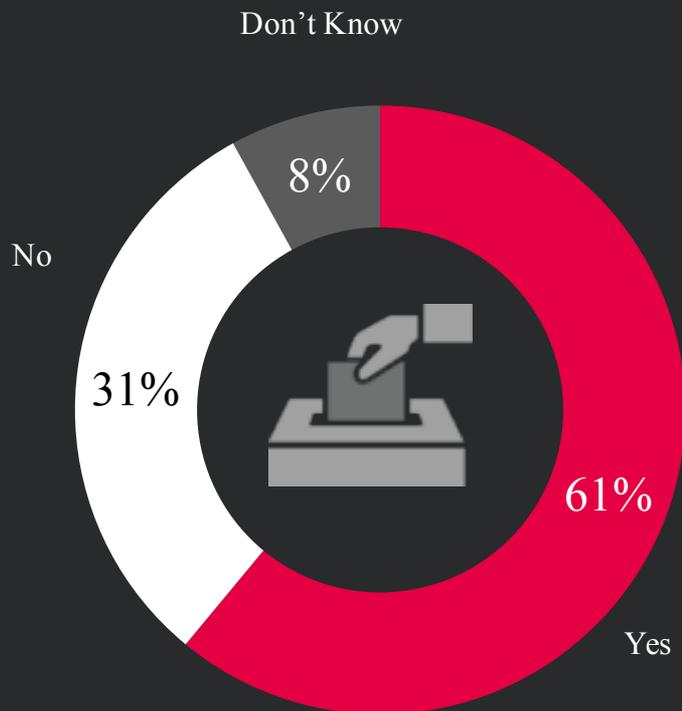
(% who agree with each statement)

Nearly half of female Australian millennials felt there should be greater female representation. Nearly a third of millennials think there should be quotas. Nearly half of males feel the gender balance in politics is about right.



Q: Which of the following statements do you agree with in relation to gender and politics? BASE: 1,008

should compulsory voting remain?



43%

Of those those not interested in politics thought that voting shouldn't be compulsory

Q: Do you think that it should remain compulsory, by law, to vote? BASE: 1,008

