Extracts from 2004 Youth Electoral Study

Figure 1: Percentage Who Have Registered, or Who Will Register on the Electoral Roll

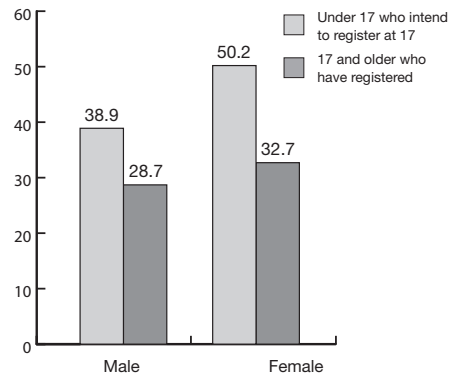


Figure 2: Intend to Vote When 18, and Would Still Vote even if Non-Compulsory, by Sex

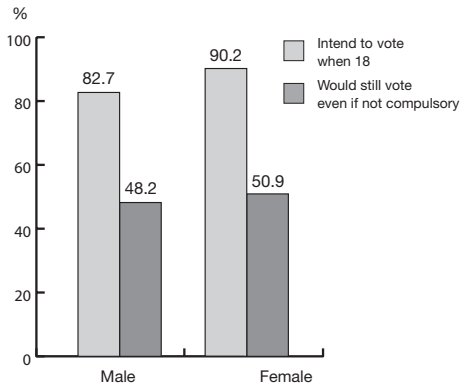
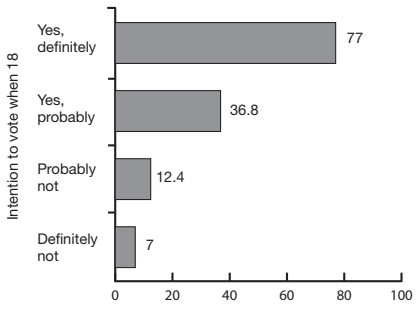


Figure 3: The Percentage Who Would Vote Even If Not Compulsory, by Intention to Vote When 18



Registering on the Commonwealth electoral roll

Key Points:

> Of the under 17 students, four out of 10 males and half of the females intended to enrol at age 17.

> Of the 17 and over students, less than three out of 10 males and a third of the females had actually enrolled.

> The intention to enrol for the under-17s was higher than actual enrolment for those who were 17 or older.

> Females were higher than the male students in both intention to enrol and actual enrolment.

Awareness of enrolling at 17 is low.

Intention to vote

The students were asked two specific questions about voting. The first was: 'Do you intend to vote in federal elections after you reach 18?' The results for all students indicate that the vast majority, 87%, either 'Definitely' or 'Probably' would vote, though there were differences for males and females, with positive responses of 82.7% and 90.2% respectively.

Key Points:

> A little more than four out of five students say they will vote when they become 18 years old.

> Females are more likely to say they will vote than boys.

> Only one out of two students would vote at 18 if voting were non-compulsory.

> Females are more likely to say they would vote, even if non-compulsory.

> The percentage who say they would vote even when compulsory is directly related to the strength of their intention to vote at age 18.

> Young people know that voting is compulsory at 18.

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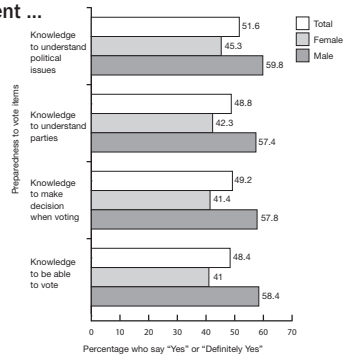
Extracts from 2004 Youth Electoral Study

Figure 4: Students Who Think They Have Sufficient ...



Preparedness to vote

Key Points:

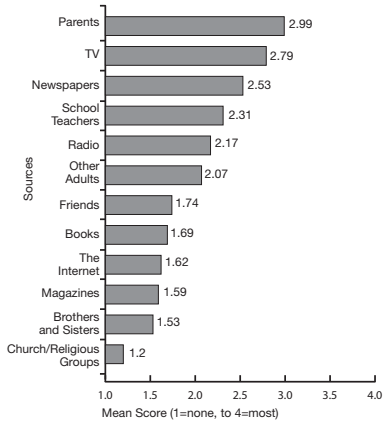
> About one in two students feel they lack the knowledge to understand the issues, the political parties, to make a decision about voting, and in general to vote.

> Young people do not perceive themselves generally as well prepared to participate in voting.

> Generally, young people don't understand the voting system.

> Female students feel less prepared to vote, in terms of knowledge, than males.

Figure 5: Source of Information about Voting in Elections



Source of information about voting in elections

If students generally do not feel well prepared to participate in voting, where do they obtain their information about voting in elections?

Key Points:

> Parents are regarded by the students as the most important source of information about voting, followed by TV and newspapers.

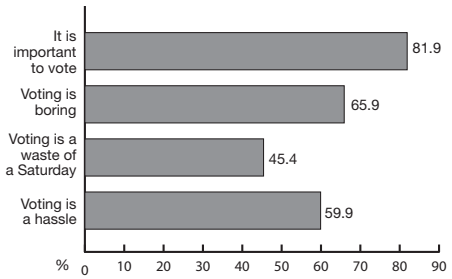
> Yet television and newspapers are regarded with skepticism.

> Church and other religious groups are the least important source of information about voting.

> School teachers are a moderate source of information about voting for students.

> The Internet has little impact as an information source on voting for students.

Figure 6: Attitudes Towards the Act of Voting



Attitudes towards voting

Key Points:

> Most (four out of five) students think that voting is important.

> Almost two out of three students think that the act of voting is boring, and slightly more than one-half think it is a hassle.

> Slightly less than one-half of students think that voting is a waste of a Saturday.

> The link between a citizen's right and duty to vote is not powerful.

Youth Electoral Study

Authors: Associate Professors Murray Print, University of Sydney, Dr Larry Saha, Australian National University, and Dr Kathy Edwards, University of Sydney. Source: *Youth Electoral Study – Report 1: Enrolment and Voting*, December 2004. The full report is available at Youth Electoral Study: www.aec.gov.au/education/

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