Australasian Fleet Conference & Exhibition

2022 Australian election

Trends in voter behavior from the Australian Election Study:

1) Influences on the vote

2) Issue priorities

3) Divisions in the electorate

4) Voter volatility

Dr Sarah Cameron

The University of Sydney

About the Australian Election Study

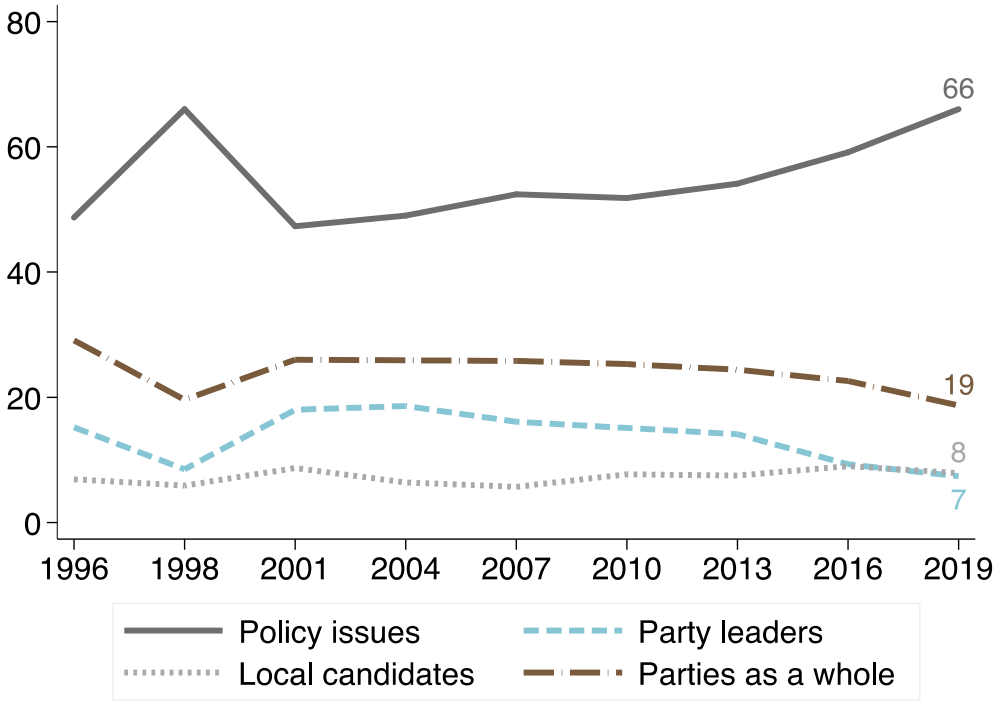
- National, post-election surveys asking ≈ 250 questions about politics and the election.
- Covers federal elections 1987-2019 (2022 coming soon)
- Surveys representative of the Australian population.
- Collaborative project ANU, Sydney.
- Data & reports available from: *australianelectionstudy.org*

AES AUSTRALIAN ELECTION STUDY

Considerations in the vote

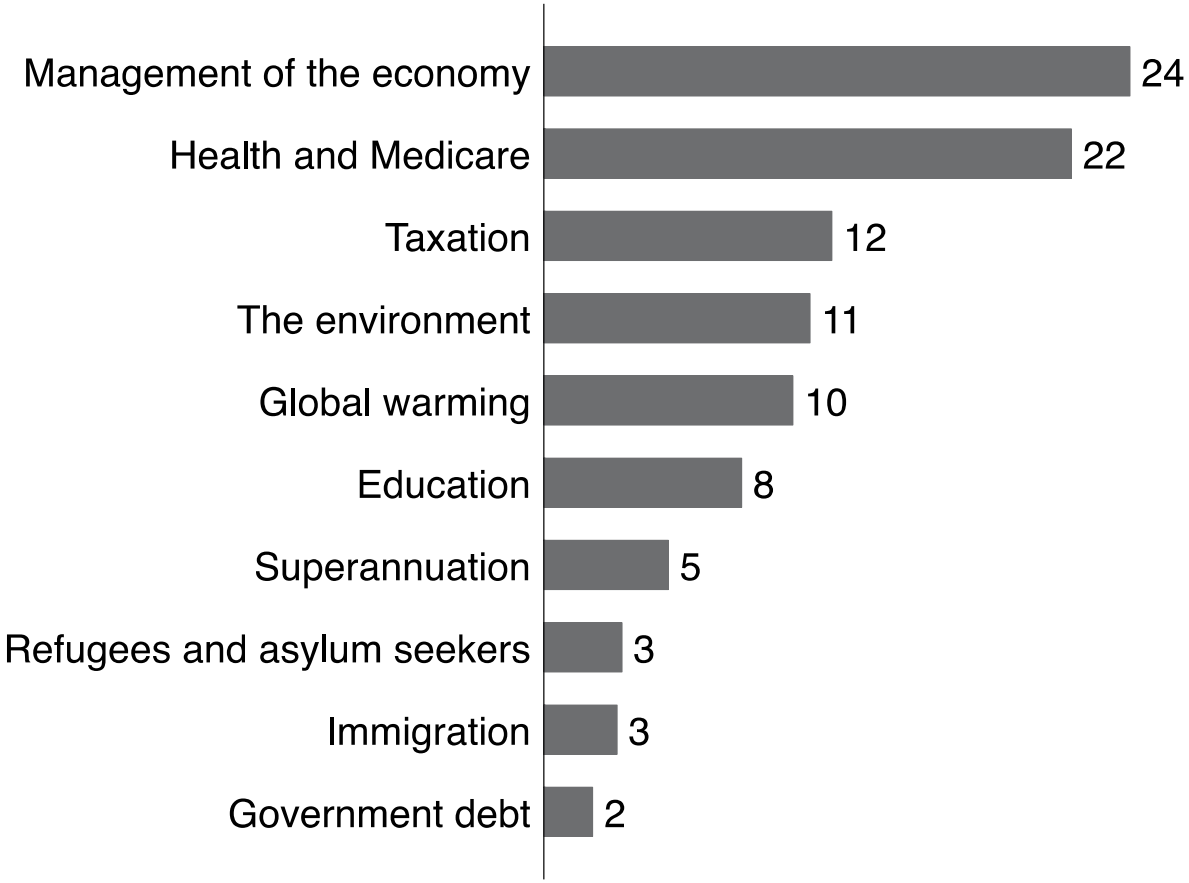
In deciding how you would vote in the election, which was most important to you?

- Policy issues most important (66%)
- Political parties (19%)
- Leaders and local candidates <10% each



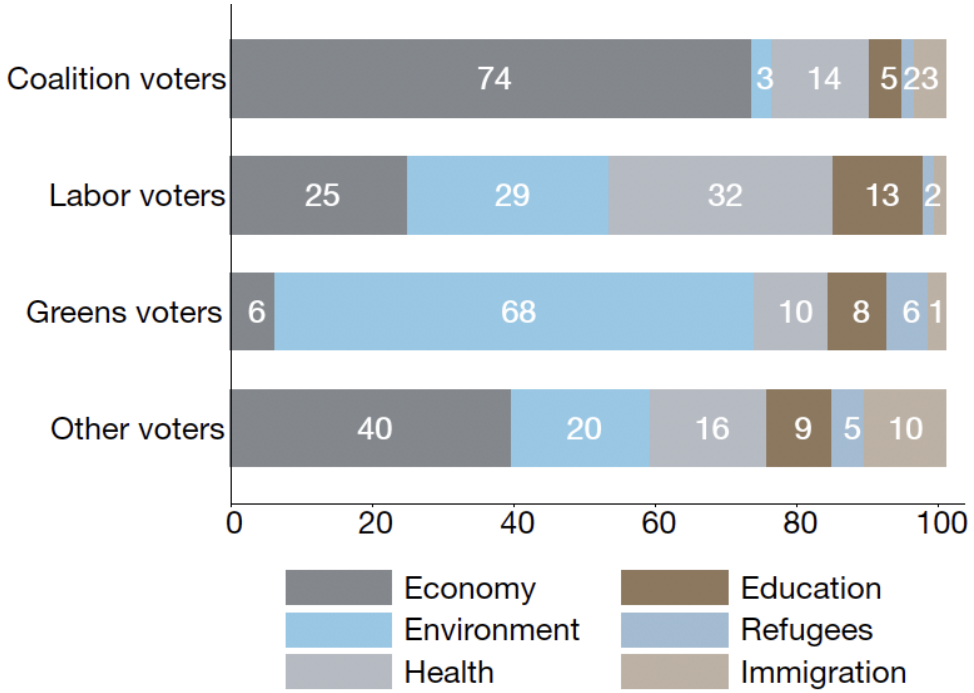
Most important election issues (2019)

Still thinking about the same 10 issues, which of these issues was the most important to you and your family during the election campaign?



Most important election issues by vote (2019)

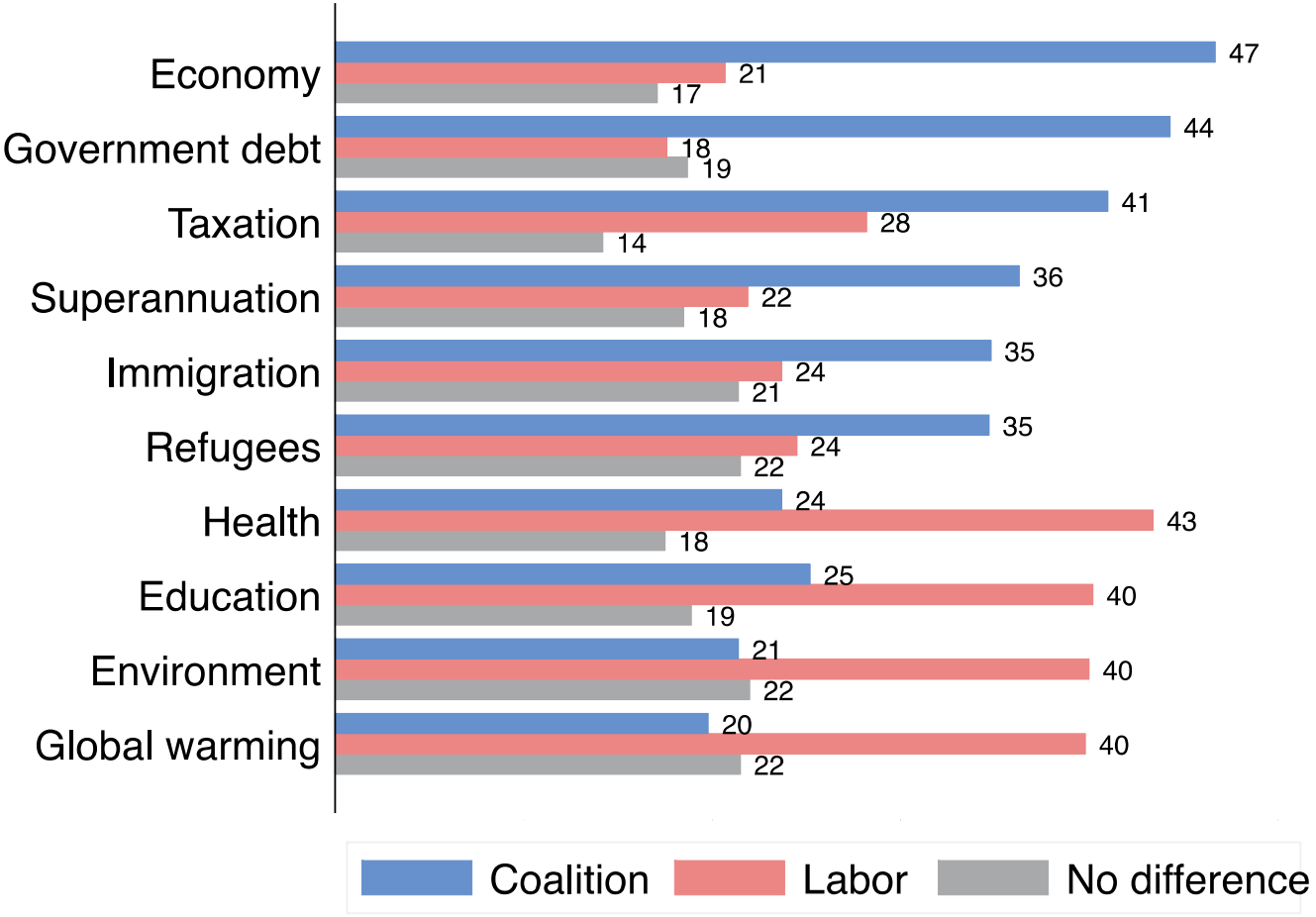
- Three in four Coalition voters saw economic issues as most important
- Labor voters more diverse: health, environment, economy
- Two-thirds of Greens voters identify environment



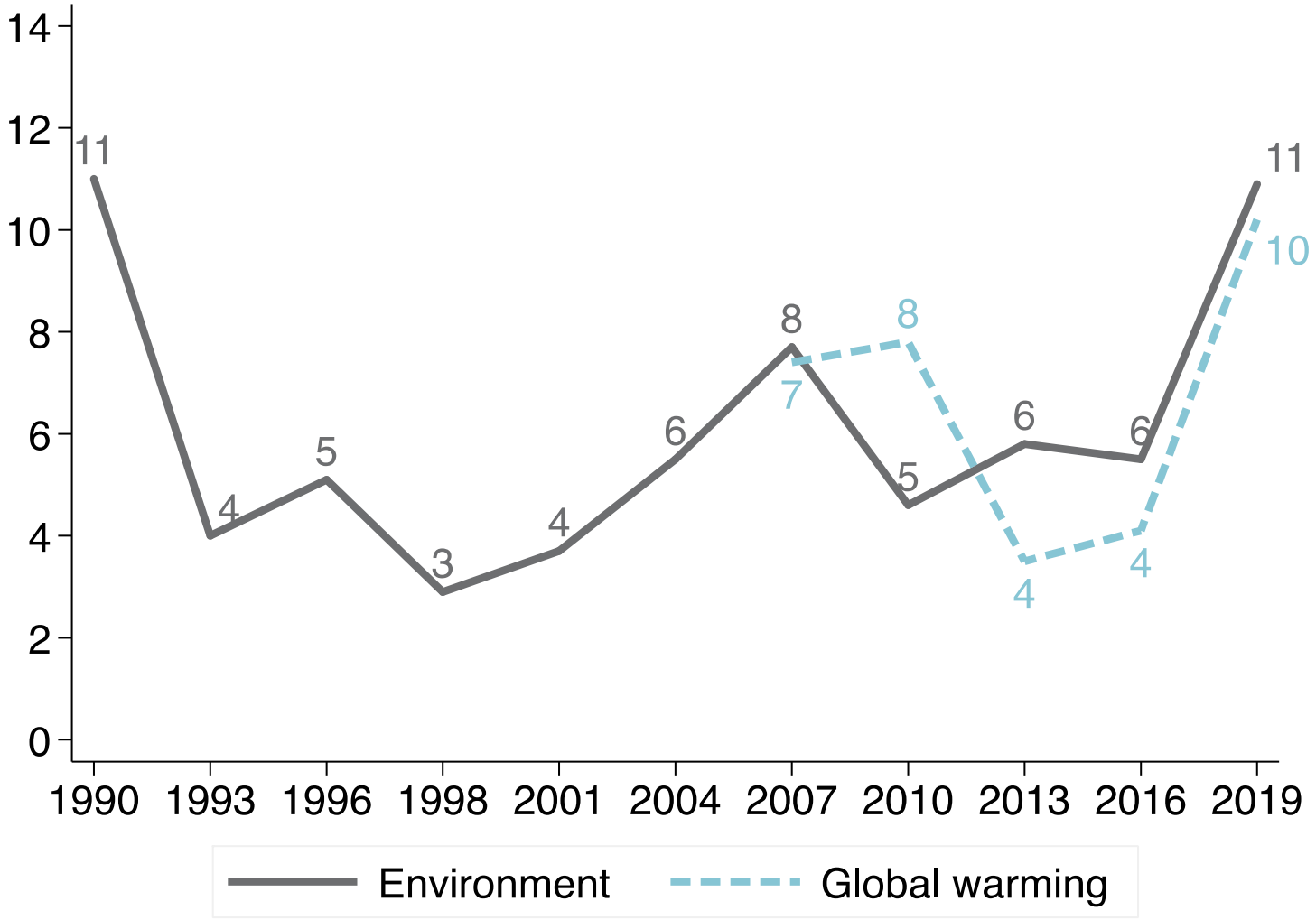
Note: Estimates are percentages.

Preferred party policies (2019)

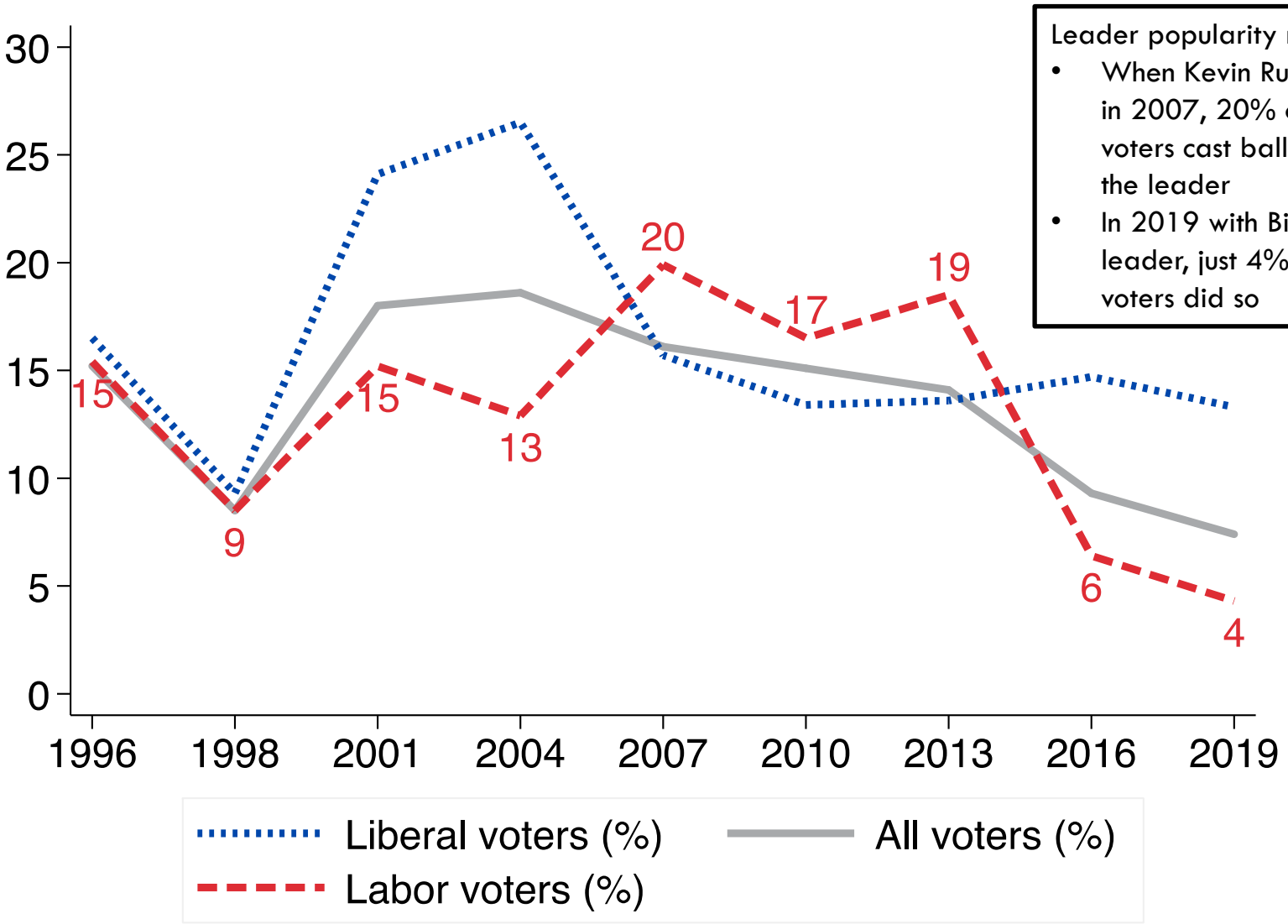
"Whose policies – the Labor Party's or the Liberal-National Coalition's – would you say come closer to your own views on each of these issues?"



The environment and global warming as most important election issues



Voting based on the party leaders, 1996-2019

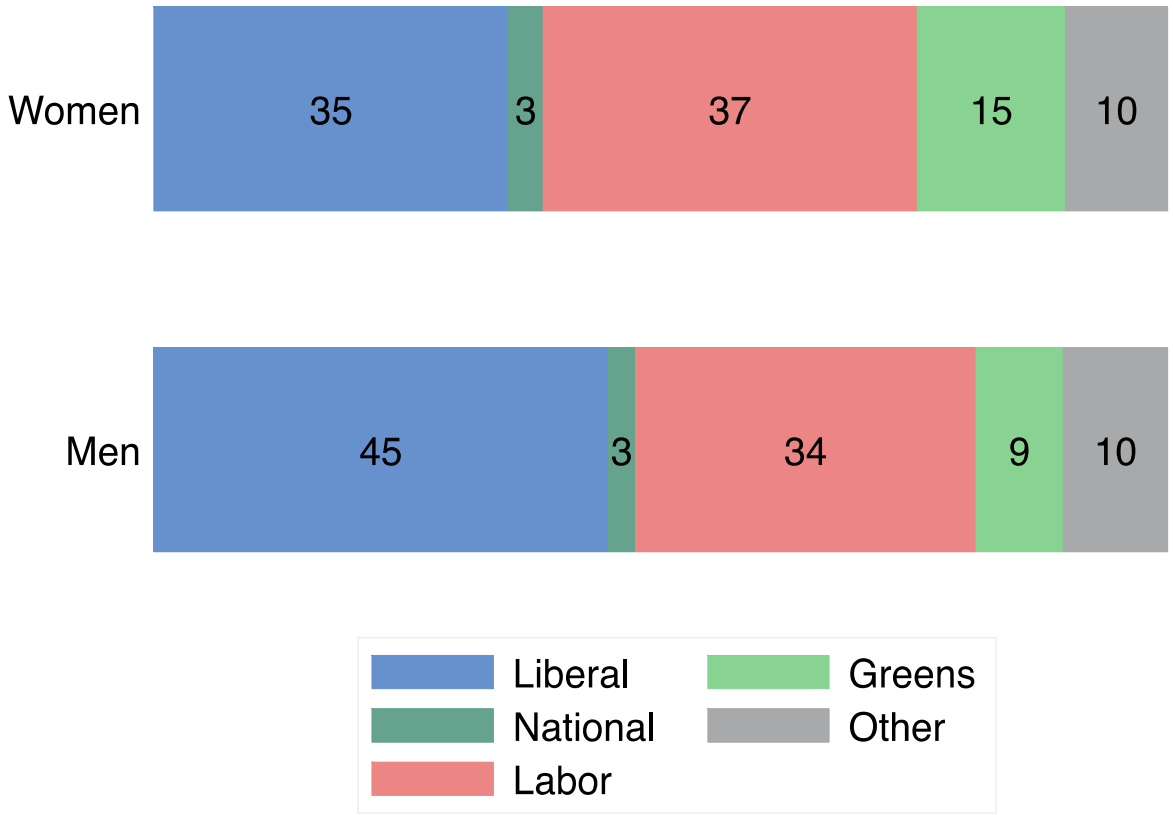


Leader popularity matters

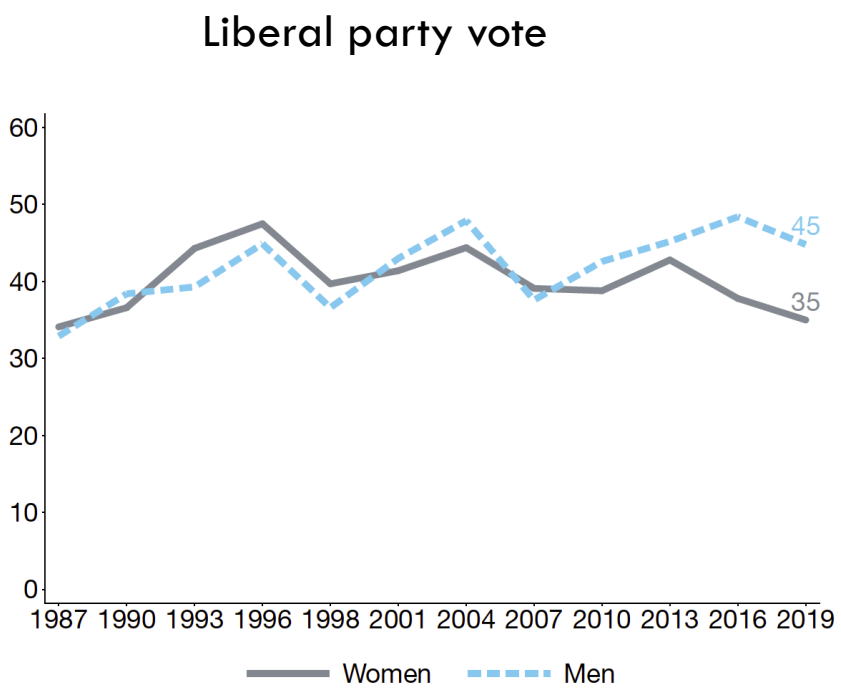
- When Kevin Rudd led Labor in 2007, 20% of Labor voters cast ballots based on the leader
- In 2019 with Bill Shorten as leader, just 4% of Labor voters did so

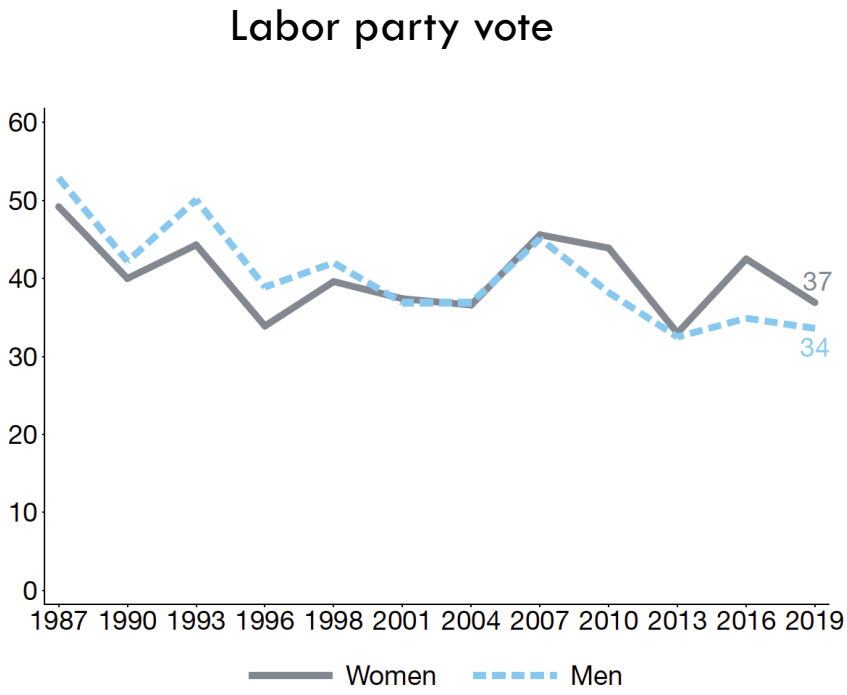
Gender differences in voting (2019)

- 10% more men vote for the Coalition
- 6% more women vote Green



Gender differences in voting – change over time



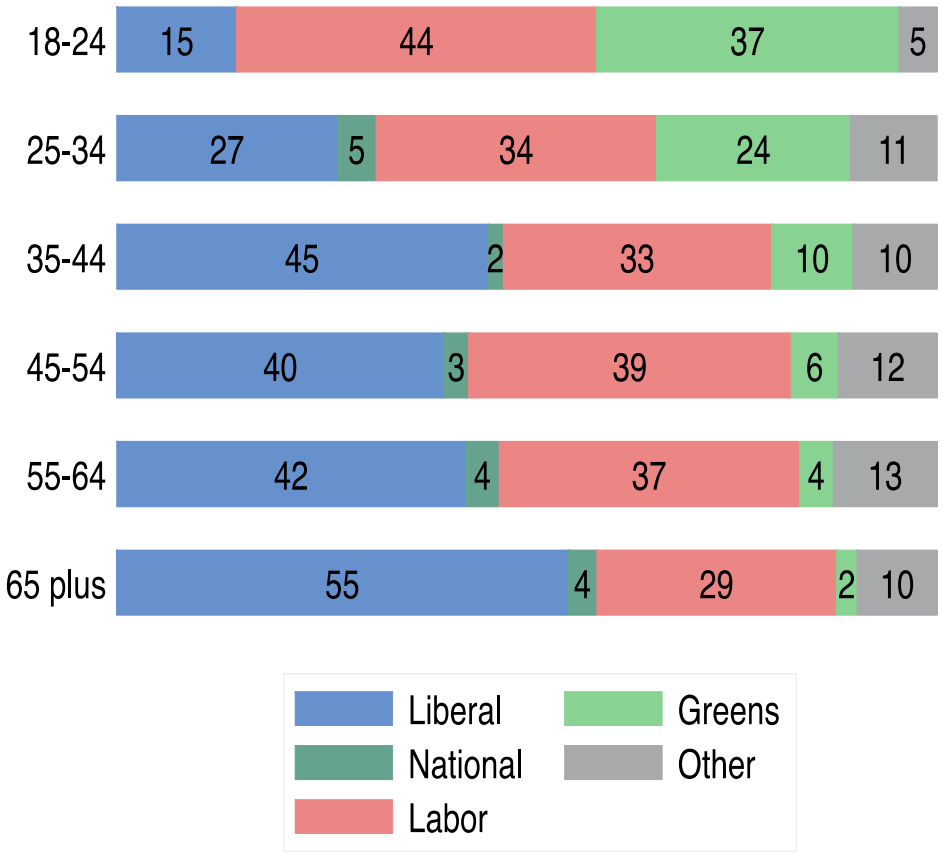


Gender difference has reversed over time.

Now men more likely to vote Liberal and women more likely to vote Labor.

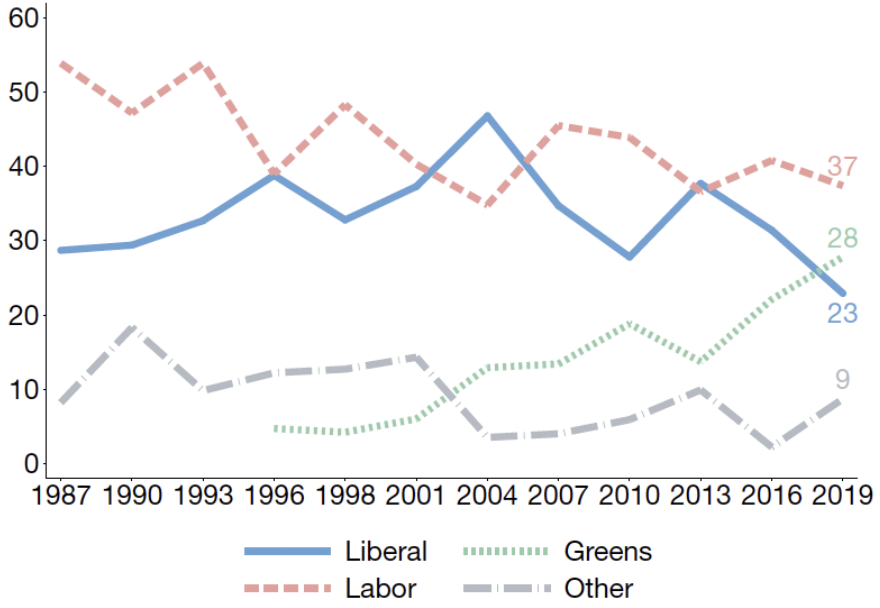
Age and vote choice (2019)

- Major age/generation divide in voting
- 37% of 18-24 year olds vote Green, compared to 2% of 65+
- The divide has been growing in importance

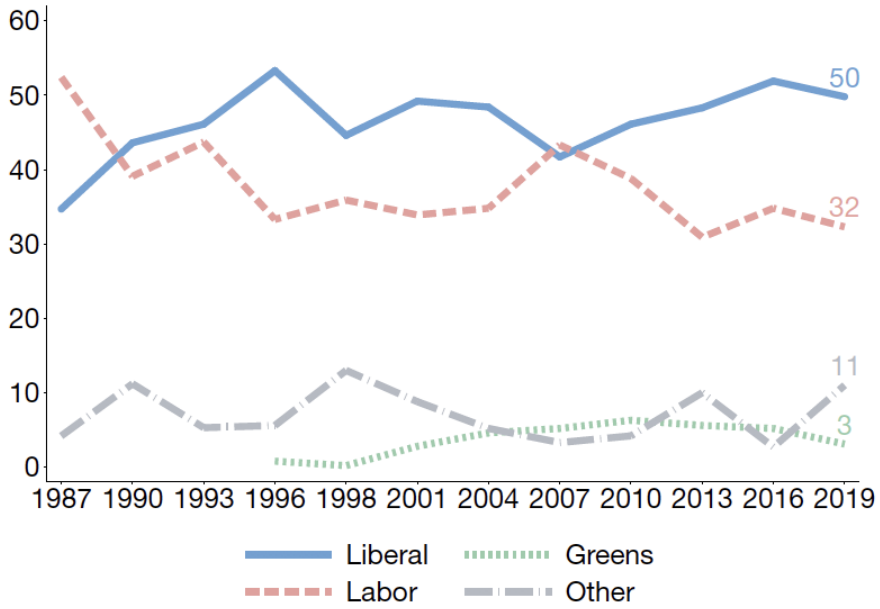


Age and vote choice

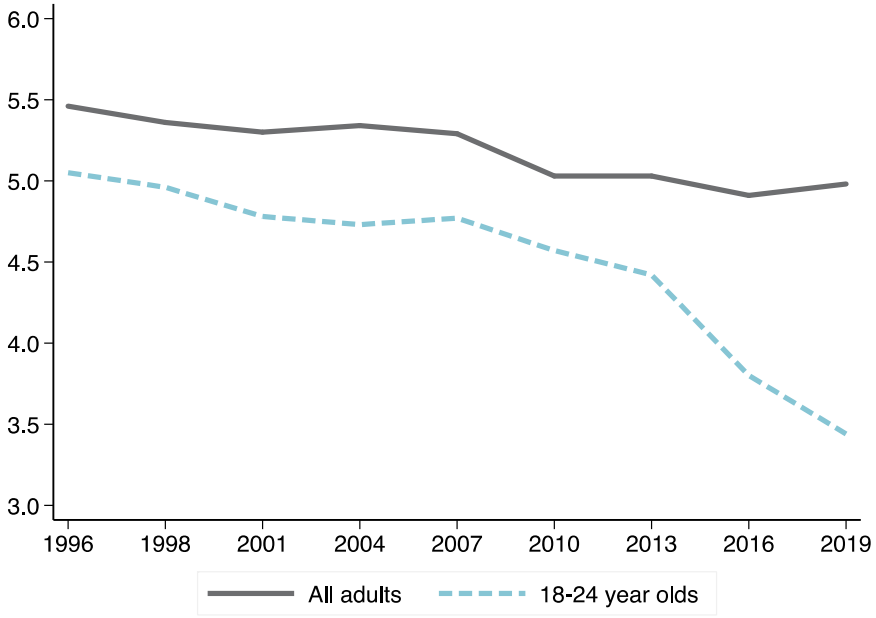
Age 18-34



Age 55+



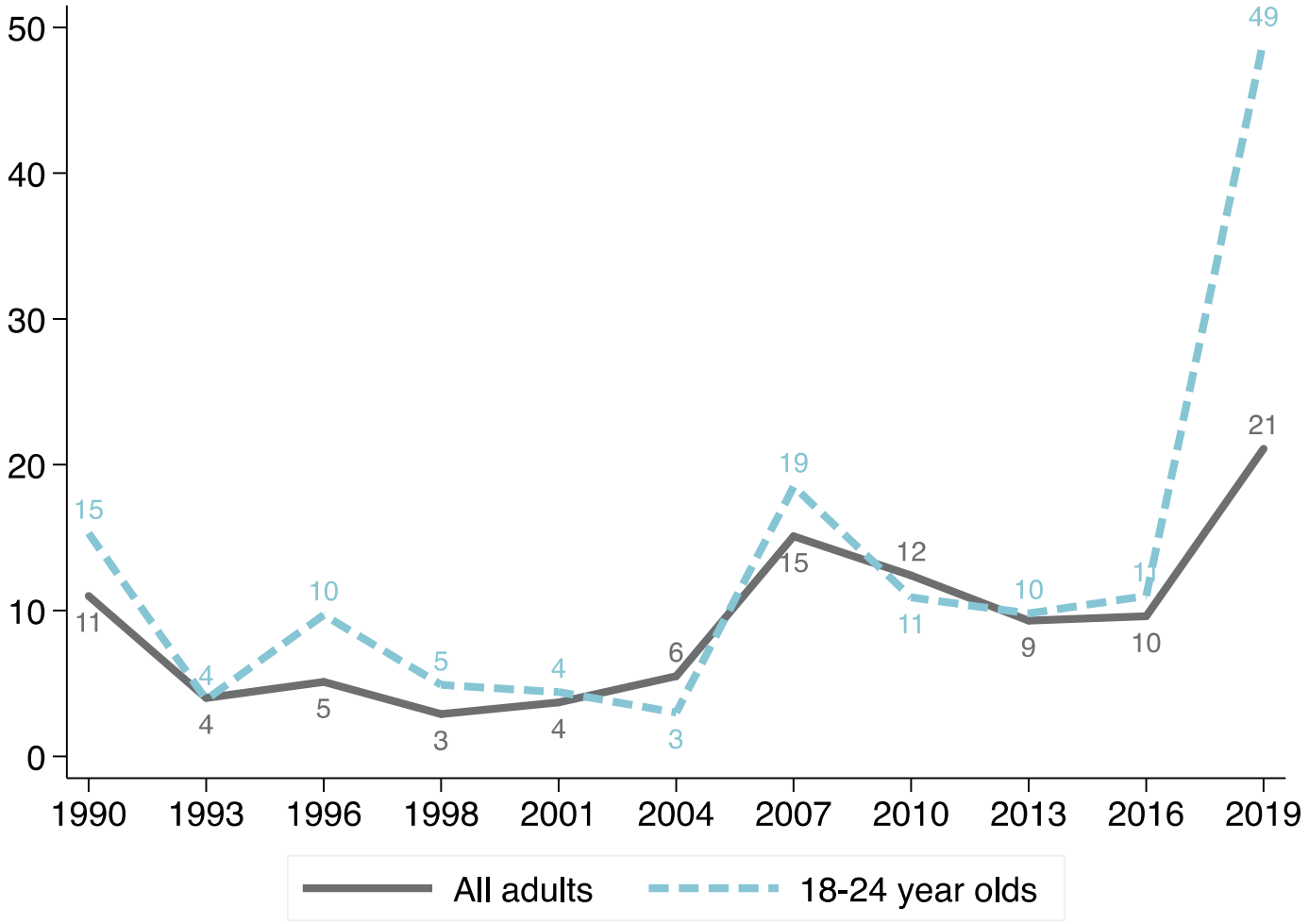
Left-right ideology



Average self-placement on left to right scale (0-10)

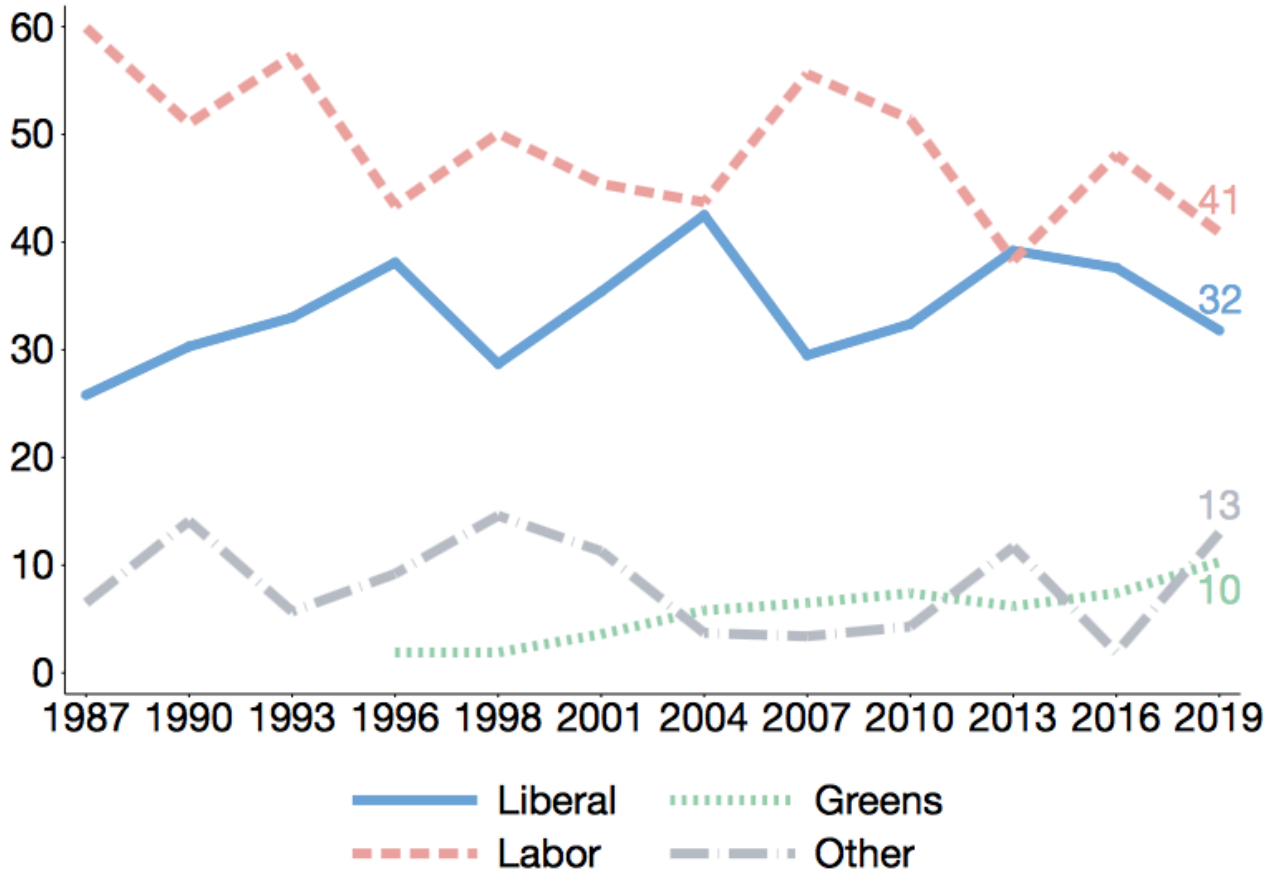
- Electorate moving to the left
- Generational change – Generation Z far to the left

Environment or climate change as most important election issue



Class differences: Working class vote choice 87-19

- Long-term erosion of Labor's working class base



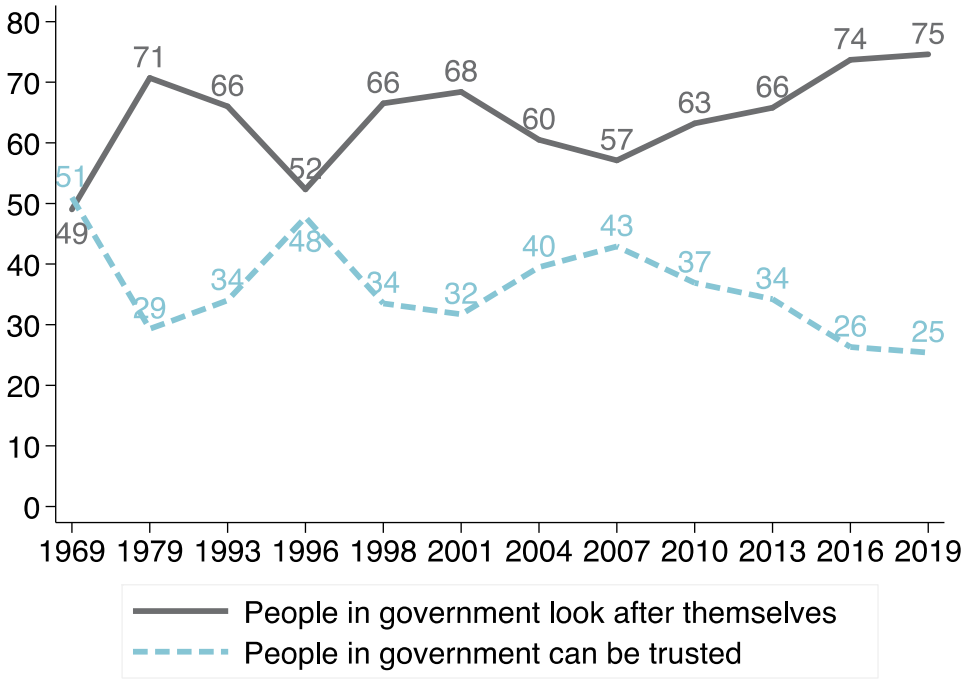
Record citizen disaffection with government

Trust in government

In 2019 at lowest level on record (25%)

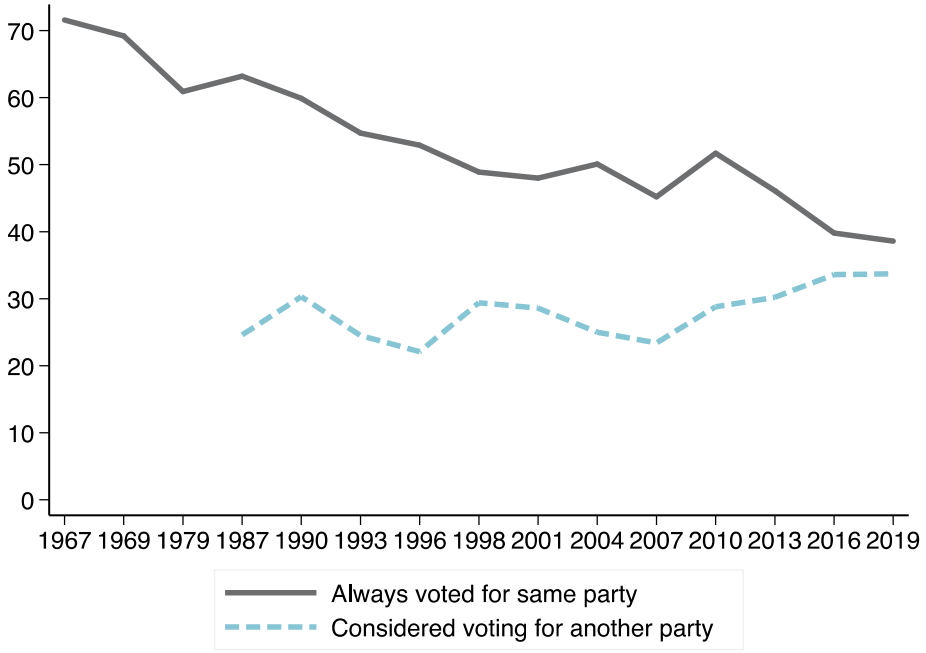
Satisfaction with democracy

Reached lowest level (59%) since 1970s in 2019



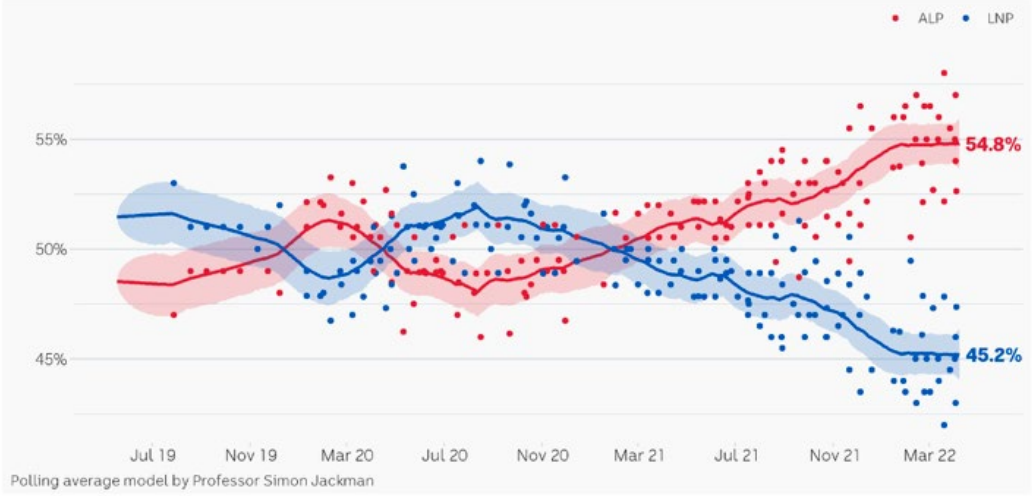
Increasingly volatile electorate

- <40% always vote the same
- Increasing proportion of voters making up their mind during the election campaign (37%) and in the final few days (27%)
- Record low levels of partisanship
- Record low use 'how to vote' cards (29%)
- Rising support for minor parties and independents



So what's going to happen?
Polling indications and challenges

- Challenges in getting a representative sample
  - Shift from landlines to mobiles
  - Declining response rates
- National samples vs. key seats
- Margin of error
- Lack of transparency from polling companies on methodology
- Polls capture a particular moment in time
- Voter volatility



2022 election within these long-term trends

Parties

- Coalition emphasis on economic management
- Labor lessons learned from 2019
  - avoiding making themselves a target on policy
  - leadership
- Populist parties, salience of COVID?
- Teal independents – climate, integrity

Voters

- Disaffected with the major parties
- Volatile electorate
- Many yet to decide how they will vote

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Audience Q&A Session

ⓘ Start presenting to display the audience questions on this slide.

Thank you!

sarah.cameron@sydney.edu.au

Australian Election Study resources available at:

www.australianelectionstudy.org