



YIP

2003

AUSTRALIAN
DEMOCRATS

YOUTH POLL 2003

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Senator Natasha Stott Despoja
PO Box 3419, Rundle Mall
Adelaide SA 5000

Phone - 08 8232 7595
Fax - 08 8232 7601

1. Introduction

For more than a decade the Australian Democrats have conducted an annual Youth Poll that highlights the attitudes and opinions of young people on a diverse range of important issues.

The poll is aimed at 15 to 20 year olds and is distributed to schools, TAFEs, Universities, youth and Church groups, and welfare, charity and community organisations in every State and Territory.

Youth Poll asks young people about employment, health, education and training, entertainment and a range of other issues.

The Democrats are the only political Party in Australia to conduct such a poll. It is part of our commitment to recognising the contribution young people make and the importance of including their views in the political process.

Young Australians continue to actively search for new opportunities, greater understanding and a platform from which to voice their ideas. Often, young people's views and opinions are misrepresented, ignored and stereotyped.

Youth Poll 2003 (also available at www.natashastottdespoja.democrats.org.au) provides a detailed insight into how young Australians feel about themselves, their place in society, their approach to life and the issues that are important to them. Youth Poll provides an invaluable indicator of the attitudes of Australia's young people.

While Youth Poll reveals a diversity of opinions on various issues, the results show that many young people are united in their concerns and feelings. This year, Youth Poll emphasises the importance of family, education, health, money, relationships and employment as issues of particular concern to young people.

Youth Poll not only provides a great opportunity for young people to have a say, but it also gives policy-makers the chance to incorporate these views to reflect the interests and concerns of young people. Like all Australians, young people deserve attention and respect from their Government. Youth Poll is just one of the many ways the Australian Democrats seek to better represent the interests of young Australians.



Senator Natasha Stott Despoja
Australian Democrats'
Senator for South Australia



2. Demographics

2.1 Sex

Consistent with previous years, female respondents slightly outnumber male respondents.

2.2 Residence

73% of respondents live in urban Australia, 15% in regional Australia and 12% in remote and rural Australia.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, more than 84% of young Australians between the age of 15 and 24 live in urban Australia².

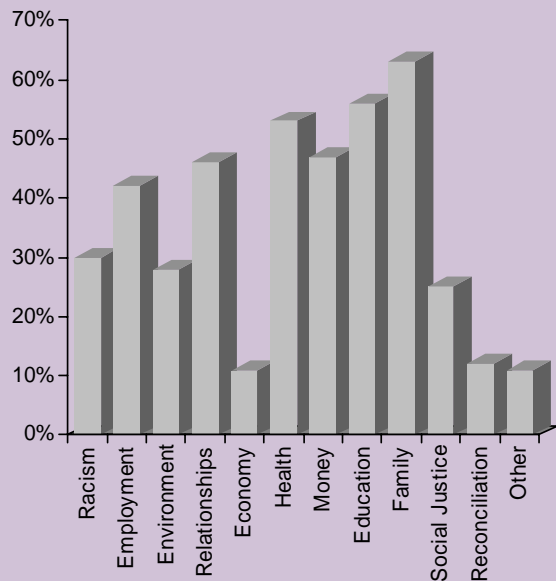
88% of respondents live with their family, a figure consistent with other Youth Polls, 6% live with friends, and 2% live alone. 1% of respondents identify as homeless (this is consistent with most other years). 3% of respondents live in 'other' accommodations, including residential colleges and foster care.

In February 2003, 83.4% of 15-24 year olds lived with their families³.

2.3 Important issues

63% of young people identified family as an issue important to them, followed by 56% nominating education. Health followed closely with 53% of respondents nominating it as an issue of importance to them. Following these were money, relationships and employment with 47%, 46% and 42% respectively.

30% of respondents identified racism as an issue of importance, with 28% nominating the environment, and 25% concerned about social justice. Reconciliation was an important issue for 12% of respondents, and 11% felt the economy was of importance to them.



A recent Roy Morgan poll found that health and education were the top issues of importance for Australians⁴.

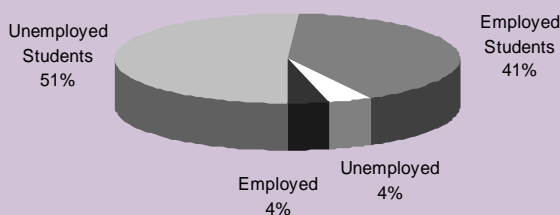
The poll found that health was a high priority for 62% of Australians, and education was an issue of concern for 55%.

3. Employment

3.1 Employment status

51% of respondents were unemployed students.
41% of respondents were employed students.

4% of respondents were unemployed while a further 4% were employed and not in some form of education and training.



Of the 715,400 15-19 year olds attending school in Australia, just over 37% are also in employment. Of those participating in tertiary education in the same age group, the percentage in employment jumps to 59%⁵.

A recent Dusseldorp Skills Forum publication⁶ estimated that 206,200 15-19 year olds or 14.9% of this cohort were in “full time education or full time employment” in May 2003. This is part of an upward trend.

The report also noted that long-term disadvantages flow from a troubled transition process between school and further education, training or employment. This highlights the need for a more effective transition system for young people between leaving school and going on to further education, training or employment.

In September 2003, there were 124,000 unemployed 15-19 year olds in Australia, representing 15.5% of that age cohort⁷.

In the first quarter of 2003, Australia had the 14th highest rate of youth unemployment in the industrialised world⁸.

Roy Morgan polls have consistently estimated unemployment to be much higher than the ABS estimate. The Roy Morgan Unemployment estimate for the June quarter in 2002 was 10.0%, compared with the ABS estimate of 6.9% for the same period⁹.

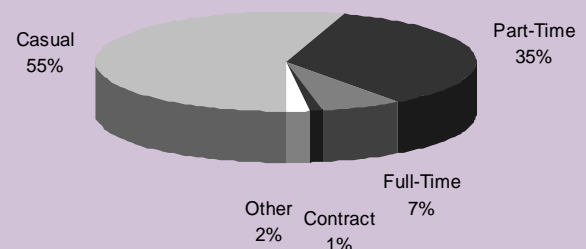
This is because the ABS definition of unemployed excludes those who have worked for one hour or more for payment, have worked without pay in a family business and have a job but were not at work during the period.

In contrast, the Roy Morgan Unemployment estimate includes all respondents not employed full or part-time who are looking for work.

3.2 Type of Employment

A majority of those respondents in paid employment are employed casually (55%) or in part-time work (35%).

Only 7% are in full-time positions, with a further 1% in contract positions.



According to the ABS, two thirds of 15-19 year olds are now employed on a casual basis¹⁰.

27.3% of the total workforce is now employed casually, up from 13% in 1982¹¹.

3.3 Job security

Do you feel you have job security?

Where 55% of respondents feel they have job security, 45% feel they do not. This is an increase from last year's Youth Poll results, where 51% of respondents felt they had job security.



A survey undertaken of younger members of the Australian Services Union revealed that their main workplace concern is job security¹².

3.4 Volunteer Work

Have you ever been involved in volunteer work?

68% of respondents have been involved in volunteer work, an increase from 64% in last year's Youth Poll. This reaffirms that young people have a great desire to contribute to the community.

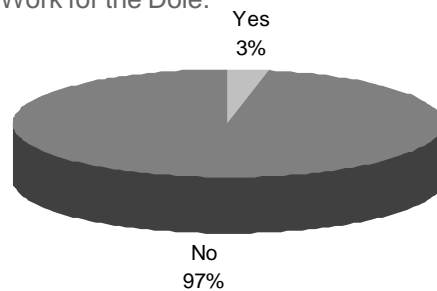


In 2000, 26.8% of 18-24 year olds volunteered, compared to 16.6% in 1995¹³. Approximately 25,700 of these young people spend on average at least 6 hours a week volunteering¹⁴.

3.5 Work for the Dole

Have you ever participated in Work for the Dole?

Only 3% of respondents have participated in Work for the Dole.



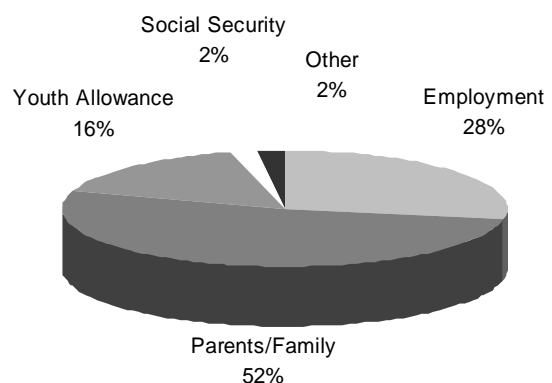
3.6 Source of Income

What is your main source of income?

Just over half the respondents (52%) are predominantly reliant on their parents or family for income.

A further 28% derive their primary form of income from employment. This is a significant increase from the 20% recorded last year.

16% of respondents are receiving Youth Allowance, and a further 2% are receiving other social security benefits.

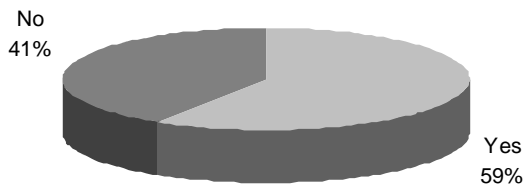


4. Health

4.1 Youth Suicide

Do you know a young person who has attempted or committed suicide?

An alarming number of respondents (59%) reported knowing a young person who has committed or attempted suicide. This is an increase from last year's result of 53%.



Australia's youth suicide rate is one of the highest in the developed world. Approximately 340 young Australians take their lives each year¹⁵ and it is estimated that for every completed suicide, there are 100 attempted suicides. However, it is difficult to determine rates of attempted suicide as many attempts go unreported.

Suicide is responsible for 24.6% of deaths in 15-24 year old males¹⁶.

Rates of intentional self-harm are highest among 15-19 year old females¹⁷.

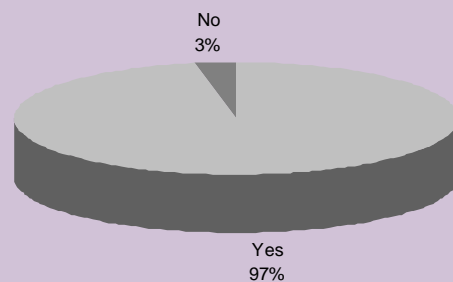
The 2000 National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing¹⁸ reported that 14% of children and adolescents between 4 and 17 years have mental health problems. For 18-24 year olds this rate rises to 27%¹⁹.

Research has shown a strong correlation between mental health and suicide. A person with a mental illness is nearly seven times more likely to attempt suicide than someone without a mental disorder²⁰.

4.2 Sex education

Should sex education be taught in schools?

An overwhelming majority of respondents (97%) believe sex education should be a permanent part of their school curriculum.



In the Australian Capital Territory, sex education guidelines are found within the Health and Physical Education Curriculum Framework, complemented by the Curriculum Profiles which describe the progression of learning typically achieved by students in years K-10.

In New South Wales, sex education guidelines are found within the Personal Development, Health and Physical Education Syllabus for Years 7 to 10 and the Personal Development, Health and Physical Education Support Document.

In the Northern Territory, sex education guidelines are found within the Learning Area Statement including NT Outcomes Profile: Health and Physical Education Transition to Year 10.

In Queensland, sex education guidelines are found within the Years 1 to 10 Health and Physical Education Syllabus. More specific information is available through the Sourcebook Modules, in particular Our Relationships at Level 4, and Sexual Identity (developed by Queensland Health) at Level 5.

In South Australia, sex education guidelines are found within the Health and Physical Education Learning Area of the South Australian Standards and Accountability Framework.

In Tasmania, sex education guidelines are found within the Health and Physical Education K–10 Core Curriculum.

In Victoria, sex education guidelines are found within the Health and Physical Education KLA within the Curriculum and Standards Framework.

In Western Australia, sex education guidelines are found within the Curriculum Framework Learning Statement for Health and Physical Education.

4.3 Condom Vending Machines

Should condom vending machines be available in schools?

62% of respondents endorse the installation of condom vending machines in schools, slightly down from 65% last year but generally consistent with previous Youth Polls.



In 2001, there were 11,626 confinements to teenagers aged 19 and younger²¹ and 4.8% of all live births in Australia were to teenage women²².

Note: “Confinement” refers to the act of giving birth rather than the number of births, that is, it does not take multiple births into account.

Chlamydia and gonorrhoea are sexually transmitted infections. Both are ‘Notifiable Infections’ and a registry of infected persons is kept by the Communicable Diseases Network Australia.

The rate of Chlamydia infection in 15-19 year olds dropped from 424 per 100,000 in 2002 to 399.1 per 100,000 in 2003, while the rate of gonorrhoea in this age group also dropped, from 86.2 per 100,000 in 2002 to 73.4 per 100,000 in 2003²³. In 1998, nearly 60% of all cases of Chlamydia were in the youth population²⁴.

Between 1991 and 1998 the rate of notification for gonococcal infection for youth doubled from 31 to 65 per 100,000²⁵.

4.4 Drugs

Have you ever tried marijuana?

43% of respondents have tried marijuana, a slight decrease from last year's result.



This compares to 34.3% of teenagers who had used marijuana in their lifetime, and just under one quarter of teenagers who had used marijuana recently, according to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's 2001 National Drug Strategy Household Survey.

Should marijuana be decriminalised?

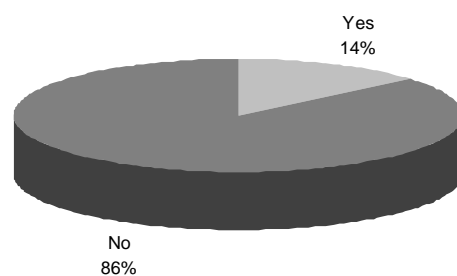
Support for the decriminalisation of marijuana was similar to last year's response with 44% of respondents supporting decriminalisation.



A 2002 Morgan Poll found 37% of 18-24 year olds and only 23% of 14-17 year olds believed smoking marijuana should be made legal²⁶.

Have you ever tried amphetamines or hallucinogens (such as Ecstasy, Speed or LSD)?

A significant minority (14%) of respondents have tried amphetamines or hallucinogens such as ecstasy, LSD or speed. This is a slight decrease from the 15% recorded last year.

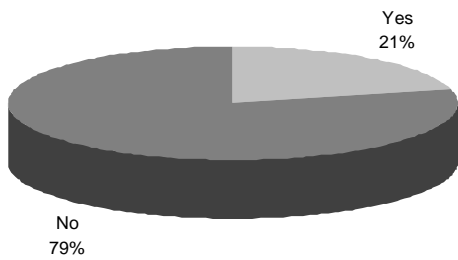


According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 5% of 14-19 year olds have used ecstasy and 6.2% have used amphetamines²⁷.

Between 1995 and 1998, the number of people reporting using illicit drugs increased for all drugs.

Do you smoke?

A significant proportion (21%) of respondents smoke. This is the same percentage recorded in 2002 and consistent with the responses on earlier years (20% in 2001 and 21% in 2000).



This figure demonstrates that despite concerted public awareness campaigns about the health hazards associated with smoking, large numbers of young people (young women in particular) continue to smoke.

A recent Australian Institute of Health and Welfare report²⁸ found that 20.3% of 14-19 year olds smoke, and a further 4.4% are ex-smokers. This report found that more than 15% of teenagers smoke daily.

Should heroin addiction be treated as an illness rather than a crime?

Despite a heroin injecting room being in operation in Kings Cross for more than two years, the issue of heroin addiction and treatment remains contentious. As in last year's Youth Poll, 58% of young Australians believe that heroin addiction should be treated as an illness rather than a 'crime'.



The number of respondents who believe that heroin addiction should be treated as an illness has been increasing over the years. In 2001, 54% of respondents believed addiction should be treated as an illness, up from 50% in 2000.

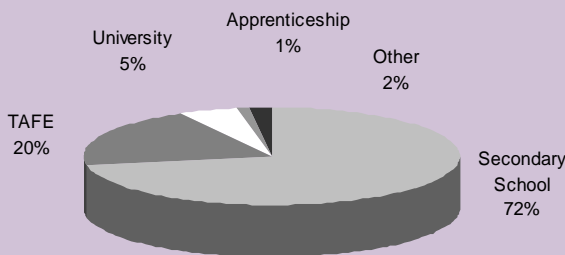
5. Education & Training

96% of Youth Poll 2003 respondents are currently studying or in some form of education or training.

This is a significant increase from last year's figure (82%), and represents the highest percentage of respondents in education and training since Youth Poll began in 1992.

72% are in secondary school and for those in further education, TAFE is the more common option, at 20% (up from 6% last year).

5% of respondents are undertaking University study, with a further 1% doing apprenticeships.



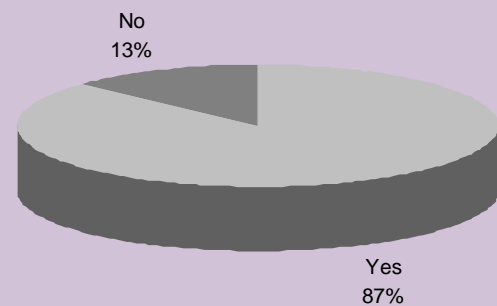
According to August 2003 ABS statistics, 1,339,600 young people aged 15-24 were attending an educational institution full-time. This figure represents 47.5% of the 15-24 year old age group²⁹. This is a decrease from last year, when 49.2% were attending full-time.

The Government's Intergenerational Report (released with the 2002 Budget), predicted that by 2042 there would be less students participating in the education sector.

Should education be publicly funded?

87% of respondents believe the Government should be responsible for adequately funding public education. This is consistent with last year's result (89%).

Those in education and training were significantly more likely to support public funding of education.



Recent comparative analysis from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) shows Australia spends 6% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on education, compared to the OECD country mean of 5.5%. 4.5% was Government expenditure, and the other 1.5% was private expenditure.

Australia is ranked 8th highest in education expenditure out of 29 OECD countries³⁰.

According to the OECD, Government expenditure on tertiary education went down by 11% between 1995 and 2000, while private expenditure on tertiary education went up by 55%. Private expenditure includes fees and charges levied on students.

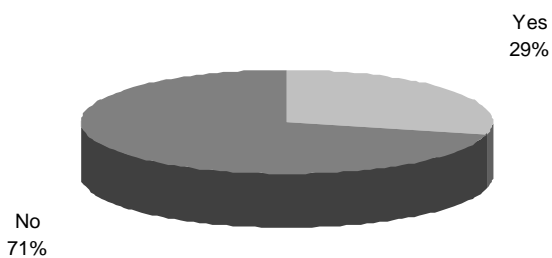
Australian students on average already pay a greater share of overall university revenue than their counterparts in the US public university system.

A report released by the AVCC in 2001³¹ found 70% of students are forced to work two days a week to survive while studying. It also found more than one third of students are missing classes because of work commitments. This is supported by Youth Poll figures, which show 41% of respondents combine work with study (see 3.1).

5.1 Youth Allowance

Are you receiving Youth Allowance or a Scholarship?

In a slight increase since last year, 29% of those in education or training are receiving Youth Allowance or a scholarship.

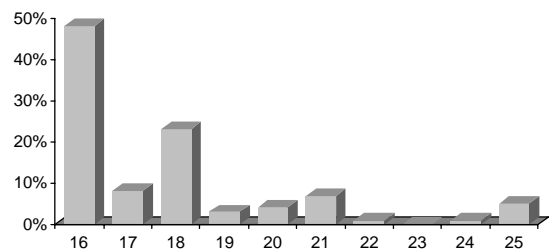


Data published recently by the Monash Centre for Population and Urban Research showed that the percentage of students under 19 who are accessing student income support has decreased markedly from 33% in 1998 to 21% in 2001.

This shows the serious effects of the Government's harsh parental income means test.

What should the Youth Allowance age of independence be?

The majority of the respondents (48%) believe the Youth Allowance age of independence should be 16 years of age. 23% believe it should be 18, while 8% believe it should be 17 and a further 7% believe it should be 21. Only 5% of the respondents believe the age of independence should be 25, as currently set by the Government.



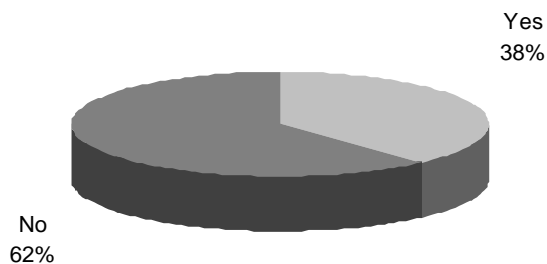
Under current legislation, students under 25 years of age are considered financially dependent on their parents (with certain exceptions)³². Parental assets and income, including the family home, jewellery and salary are assessed in determining whether a student should receive income support. Those who qualify for income support, but are considered 'dependent' receive approximately half the 'independent' allowance.

The Monash research referred to above also shows that students are increasingly delaying entry to university to earn money to qualify as independent students.

Between 1998 and 2001 enrolments by 21, 22 and 23 year olds increased by 11%, 15% and 12% respectively, compared to only a 1% increase in 19 year olds. 36% of students under 25 were able to access Youth Allowance in 2001 compared to 21% of students under 19.

Are the current levels of student assistance adequate?

The majority of respondents (62%) believe the current levels of student assistance are not adequate. This is up from 58% last year.



Those in receipt of Youth Allowance were significantly more likely to feel that allowances were inadequate.

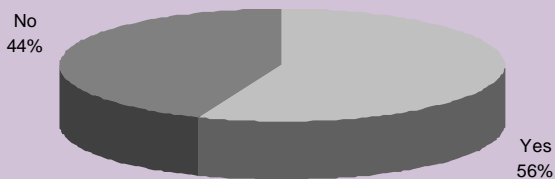
According to the National Union of Students, maximum Youth Allowance payments are currently 20% below the poverty line and maximum Austudy payments are 39% below the poverty line³³.

The current rates of Youth Allowance are:	per fortnight
Single, no children, under 18, at home:	\$169.70
Single, no children, under 18, away from home:	\$310.10
Single, no children, 18 and over, at home:	\$204.20
Single, no children, 18 and over, away from home:	\$310.10
Single, with children:	\$406.40
Partnered, no children:	\$310.10
Partnered with children:	\$340.60

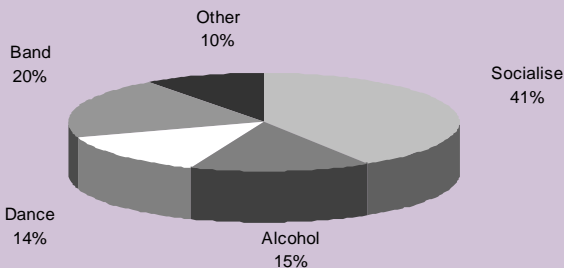
6. Entertainment

Have you ever attended a licensed venue while under-age?

Consistent with previous Youth Polls, 56% of young people have attended a licensed venue while under-age.



The most popular reasons respondents attend licensed venues under-age are to socialise (41%) and for the band (20%). 15% of respondents identified alcohol as the primary reason they attend licensed venues, down from 29% last year. Dancing was the primary motivation for a further 14% of respondents.

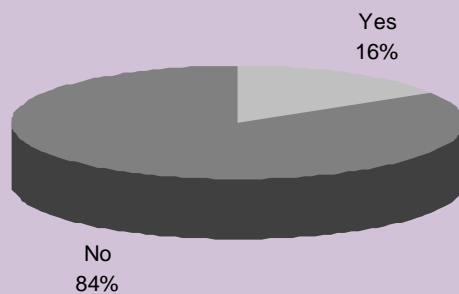


According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2002), 73.6% of 14-19 year olds consume alcohol and 21.6% of young people in this age group had never consumed alcohol³⁴.

In 2001, 28.3% of 14-19 year olds reported consuming alcohol at least weekly³⁵.

Are there enough under-age entertainment venues for young people?

84% of respondents believe there are not enough under-age venues for young people.



7. National Issues

Although most Youth Poll respondents are below the voting age, they possess strong opinions on a range of issues.

Young people expressed a perceived inability to have a significant impact on the decisions that affect them. Their poor representation in policy-making processes has left many young Australians feeling cynical and disillusioned about politics. They have become increasingly reliant on representative bodies to convey their concerns.

Youth Poll 2003 highlights that young Australians have a strong social conscience with specific reference to reconciliation, the republic, gay and lesbian protection under law, and privacy.

7.1 Asylum seekers

Do you support the mandatory detention of asylum seekers?

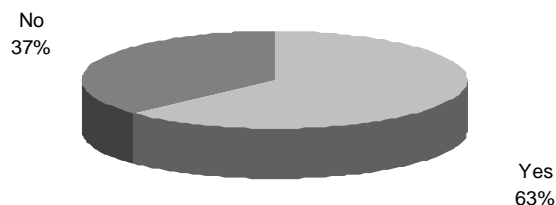
43% of respondents do not support the mandatory detention of asylum seekers. This is a significant decrease from last year's figure of 59%.



7.2 Indigenous treaty

Do you think the Government should enter into a treaty with Indigenous Australians?

As in Youth Poll 2001 and 2002, 63% of respondents believe the Government should enter into a treaty with Indigenous Australians.

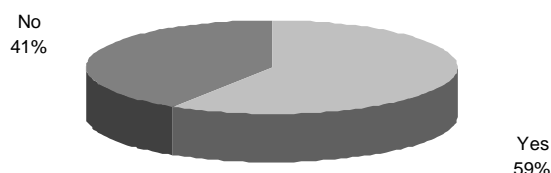


A 2001 poll by *The Age* found that 74% of 18-24 year olds supported entering into a treaty with Indigenous people, the highest support rate of the age groups surveyed³⁶.

7.3 Republic

Should Australia be a Republic?

Significant support still remains for Australia to become a Republic with 59% of young Australians supporting such a move. This is down from 61% in 2002 and 69% in 2001.



In a Newspann taken in November 2002, 57% of 18-34 year olds indicated that they were in favour of an Australian Republic³⁷. Those under 50 are significantly more likely to support an Australian Republic.

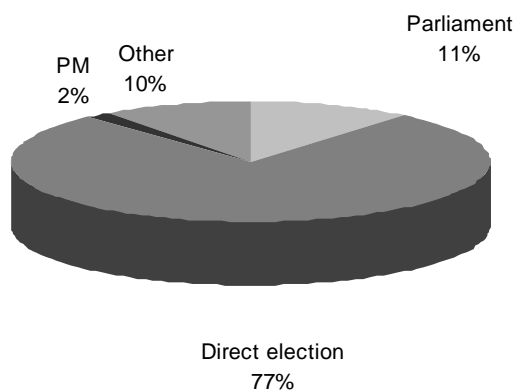
Despite a temporary lull following the 1999 Referendum, the move towards an Australian Republic is, once again, gaining momentum. In 2001, Senator Natasha Stott Despoja introduced the *Republic (Consultation of the People) Bill* into the Federal Parliament. Unfortunately, Government inaction on this issue has meant that the Bill has never been debated nor put to a vote.

In December 2001, 418 Australians participated in a conference in Corowa. The resolution passed at the conference favoured a three-question plebiscite, asking whether Australia should become a Republic, what the Head of State should be called and how the Head of State should be appointed.

A Parliamentary Inquiry was established in June 2003 to consider the most appropriate process towards an Australian Republic and alternative models.

How should the leader of an Australian Republic be chosen?

The vast majority of respondents (77%) believe the President of an Australian Republic should be popularly elected, followed by 11% preferring a President elected by the Parliament, 10% supporting other methods of election and only 2% supporting Prime Ministerial selection of a President.

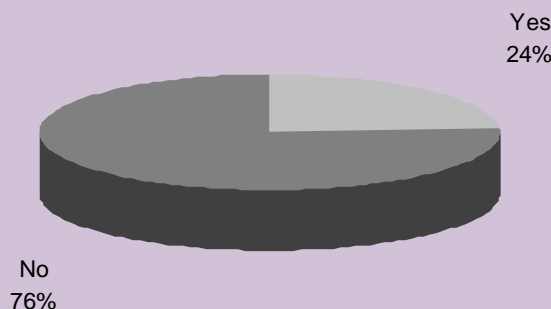


A Newspoll survey of November 2002 found that the majority of respondents who supported a Republic believed that the President should be popularly elected. A significant percentage also supported Parliamentary appointment of the President³⁸.

7.4 Youth representation

Should the voting age be lowered to 16?

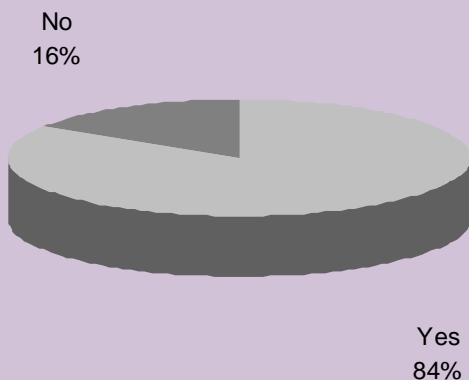
The majority of respondents (76%) do not believe that the voting age should be lowered to 16.



A study of 15 and 16 year olds in 2000 found that only 17% of those surveyed had been politically active through writing letters, attending protests or joining organisations³⁹. Those who had been active also tended to be concentrated in families of high socio-economic status.

If you're 18, are you registered to vote?

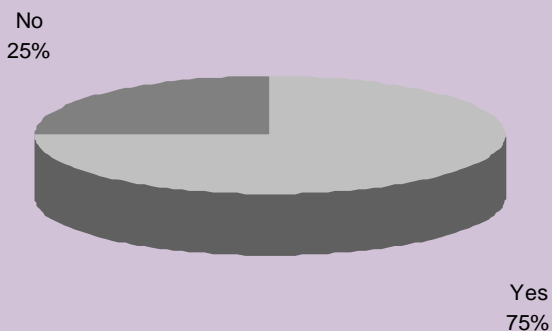
84% of respondents eligible to vote (that is those respondents aged 18 years or older) are on the electoral roll. This is up on last year's figure of 78%.



The Australian Electoral Commission reports that only 59% of 18 year olds are registered to vote. This rises to 87% for 20 year olds⁴⁰.

Do you think that more young people in Parliament would make a difference for the better?

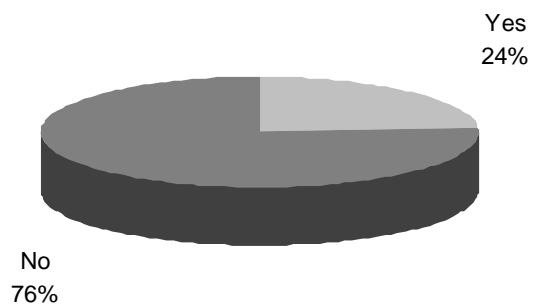
75% of young people believe that increased youth representation in Parliament would make a difference for the better. This is consistent with responses in previous years. Youth Poll respondents have consistently expressed their frustration with politics and the lack of youth representation. Many believe their rights are being ignored and they are often misrepresented and unfairly stereotyped.



7.5 Environment

Is the Government doing enough to protect our environment?

Young people maintain strong concerns about the state of the environment. More than three quarters of respondents (76%) believe the Government is not doing enough to protect our natural resources.



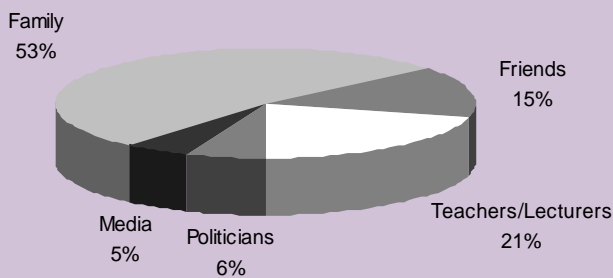
A recent Roy Morgan poll found that concern for the environment had increased to 17% in May 2003, from 14% in December 2002⁴¹.

7.6 Trust

Who do you trust most about politics?

Young people tend to be sceptical about 'official' sources of political information, particularly politicians and the media. Only 6% of 2003 respondents trust politicians for political information, with 5% trusting the media.

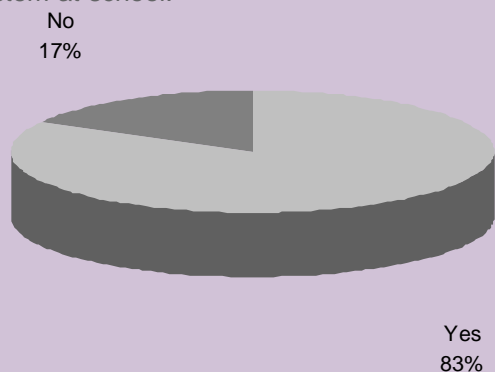
The family is considered the most trustworthy source of political information, at 53%. Teachers and lecturers follow at 21% and friends at 15%.



7.7 Teaching policies

Should students be taught about Australia's political and legal system at school?

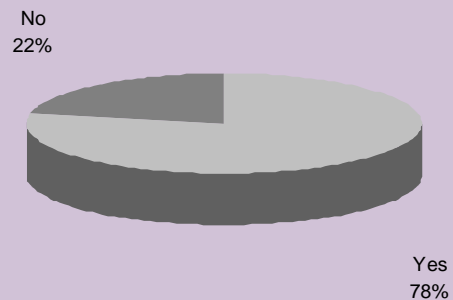
83% of respondents believe students should be taught about Australia's political and legal system at school.



7.8 Sexuality

Should gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people have the same legal protection as heterosexuals?

78% of respondents believe that gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people should be given the same legal protection as heterosexuals. This represents a slight decrease from last year, but a slight increase on the 2001 result.



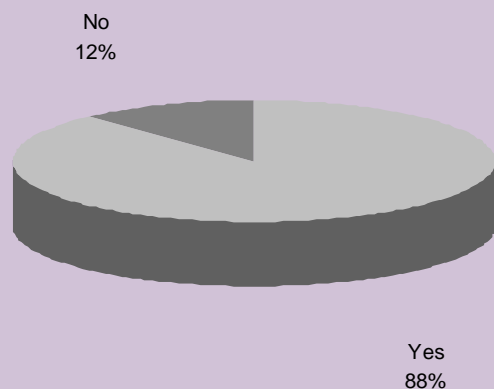
A 2001 Roy Morgan Poll found that 36% of Australians believe that homosexuality is immoral. In the 14-24 age group, this fell to 29%.⁴²

A 2001 poll in *The West Australian* found that 86% of those surveyed supported ending discrimination against gay and lesbian people in employment and housing, however, less than half this number supported lowering the age of consent for homosexual sex to that for heterosexual sex. 55% of respondents believed that gay and lesbian couples should have the same legal rights as heterosexual couples.⁴³

7.9 Privacy

Should your genetic information be kept private?

An overwhelming 88% of respondents believe their genetic information should be kept private. This is the first time that a question dealing specifically with genetic privacy has been asked by Youth Poll.



A report prepared for the Office of the Federal Privacy Commissioner in July 2001⁴⁴ found that 13% of people were reluctant to provide genetic information to organisations.

The report found that when people were asked to nominate the type of personal information they were most reluctant to hand over, "financial details topped the list (40%), followed by income (11%), medical or health information (7%), home address (4%), phone number (3%) and genetic information (3%)⁴⁵.

8. State Issues

Each respondent only answered one of the following questions, depending on their state of residence.

NT

Would you support changing the Constitution to recognise the Northern Territory as an Australian State?

64% of Northern Territory respondents support changing the Constitution to recognise the Northern Territory as a State. This is down from 68% in 2002.

ACT

Do you think there is enough affordable rental accommodation in the ACT?

All ACT respondents feel there is not enough affordable rental accommodation in Canberra.

SA

Should nuclear waste be dumped in SA?

An overwhelming 93% of South Australian respondents believe that nuclear waste should not be dumped in their State. This represents a small increase from last year's 91%.

In July, the Federal Government compulsorily acquired Arcoona Station near Woomera in South Australia, to build a low-level nuclear waste dump.

This move has been strongly opposed by the South Australian Government, Indigenous South Australians and environmental groups.

A recent poll by *The Advertiser* found that 72% of South Australians oppose the repository⁴⁶.

NSW

Should the burning of old growth timber be considered renewable energy?

73% of New South Wales respondents believe that the burning of old growth timber should not be considered renewable energy. This is a significant increase from the 54% recorded in last year's Youth Poll.

VIC

Should drug testing be allowed in schools?

67% of Victorian respondents believe drug testing should not be allowed in schools. This is a significant increase from 2002, when 59% of respondents believed this.

WA

Do you support mandatory sentencing for home burglaries?

64% of Western Australian respondents support mandatory sentencing for home burglaries. This is a decrease from last year's figure of 76%.

QLD

Is the Government doing enough to protect the Great Barrier Reef?

An overwhelming 94% of Queensland respondents believe the Government is not doing enough to protect the Great Barrier Reef.

TAS

Do you think you may have to travel interstate for employment or education opportunities?

92% of Tasmanian respondents believe that they may have to travel interstate for greater employment and education opportunities, up from 85% last year. Interestingly, 100% of 2000 respondents thought they would have to leave Tasmania for education and employment opportunities.

9. Conclusion - A snapshot of young Australians

Young Australians are acutely aware of the issues facing them and concerned about the future of Australia. Family and education are seen as the most important issues, but health, money, relationships and employment are also of serious concern.

A significant majority think the Government should enter into a treaty with Indigenous Australians.

A significant number of young people continue to support Australia becoming a Republic, with a clear majority wishing to see the President popularly elected.

The majority of young Australians are involved in some form of education and training, and believe that education should be publicly funded. Many students continue to work on a casual or part-time basis to support themselves, and believe that current levels of student assistance are inadequate.

An overwhelming majority of young people do not support the Youth Allowance age of independence being 25 years. Nearly half believe that the age of independence should be 16 years of age.

Young people also think that it should be illegal to discriminate on the basis of sexuality, with the vast majority believing that gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people deserve the same legal protection as heterosexuals.

There has been a small decrease in the number of young people who have tried marijuana, amphetamines and hallucinogens, and the majority of respondents continue to believe that heroin addiction should be treated as an illness rather than a crime.

Young people are disinclined to trust politicians and the media, preferring to get information about politics from their families, teachers and lecturers or friends.

Young Australians continue to care deeply about the protection of the environment and believe the Government is not doing enough in this area.

Young people also strongly believe that their genetic information should be kept private.

In the Northern Territory, a majority of respondents support changing the Constitution to recognise the Northern Territory as a State.

In the Australian Capital Territory, all young people surveyed thought there was a lack of affordable rental accommodation in Canberra.

In South Australia, an overwhelming majority feel that nuclear waste should not be dumped in their State.

In New South Wales, the majority of young people believe the burning of old growth timber should not be considered renewable energy.

In Victoria, the majority of young people believe drug testing should not be allowed in schools.

The majority of young Western Australians support mandatory sentencing for home burglaries.

In Queensland, an overwhelming majority of young people feel the Government is not doing enough to protect the Great Barrier Reef.

Young Tasmanians still believe they will have to travel interstate for education and employment opportunities.

While young people feel an increasing sense of alienation from political and policy-making processes in this country, the views expressed by them reveal an informed and articulate generation with a genuine agenda for positive change. A clear majority believe that more young people in Parliament would make a difference for the better.

Footnotes

- ¹ ABS 3101.0, June 2002
- ² ABS, Census 2001
- ³ ABS 6203.0, February 2003
- ⁴ Domestic Issues Are Top Priority for Electors, Roy Morgan Research, June 12, 2003
- ⁵ ABS 6202.0, September 2003
- ⁶ Dusseldorp Skills Forum, 'How Young People are Faring: Key Indicators 2003', August 2003
- ⁷ ABS 6202.0, September 2003
- ⁸ OECD Quarterly Labour Force Statistics, No. 1, 2001
- ⁹ "Real Unemployment in Australia Hovers at Around 10 per cent", Roy Morgan Research, June 2001
- ¹⁰ ABS, 6310.0
- ¹¹ ACTU, <http://www.actu.asn.au/congress2003/papers/youthbackgroundpaper.html>
- ¹² 'ASU Launch Youth Committee', <http://www.actu.asn.au/publiccampaigns/worker2worker/asuyooof.html>
- ¹³ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2000, 4441.0
- ¹⁴ "Australia's Highly Committed Volunteers", Volunteers and Volunteering, Jeni Warburton and Melanie Oppenheimer (Eds), The Federation Press, Sydney
- ¹⁵ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2001, 3303.0
- ¹⁶ ABS, 3303.0
- ¹⁷ AIHW, Hospital Separations due to injury and poisoning Australia 1999-00, May 2002
- ¹⁸ Child and Adolescent Component, National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing, Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care, 2000
- ¹⁹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1997, 4326.0
- ²⁰ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1997, 4326.0
- ²¹ ABS 3301.0, 2000
- ²² ABS 3301.0, 2000
- ²³ The National Centre in HIV Epidemiology and Clinical Research Annual Surveillance Report 2002
- ²⁴ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Australia's Young People: Their Health and Wellbeing, 1999
- ²⁵ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Australia's Young People: Their Health and Wellbeing, 1999
- ²⁶ Roy Morgan Poll 3491/2002, January 2002
- ²⁷ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Statistics on Drug Use in Australia, 2002
- ²⁸ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Statistics on Drug Use in Australia, 2002
- ²⁹ ABS 6105.0
- ³⁰ OECD Education at a Glance, 2003
- ³¹ Paying Their Way, Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee, 2001
- ³² from http://www.centrelink.gov.au/internet/internet.nsf/payments/qual_ind_yal.htm, You are considered independent if you are aged 16 or over and: have been out of school at least 18 months and earned at least \$15 990 in an 18 month period before lodging a claim (this amount is 75 per cent of the Commonwealth Training Wage); or have worked to support yourself for at least 18 months, working full-time at least 30 hours a week during the preceding two years (or for a period or periods of 12 months if you are considered disadvantaged); or have worked part-time for at least 15 hours a week for at least two years since last leaving school; or are 25 or more and a full-time student (in special circumstances). You are also considered independent if you are aged 15-24 and : are above school leaving age in your state or territory; and are a refugee, an orphan or it is unreasonable for you to live at home; or are in state care, or only stopped being in state care because of your age; have, or have had a dependent child; are or have been, married, including living in a marriage-like relationship for 12 months or more, or six months (in special circumstances); have parents who cannot exercise their responsibilities.
- ³³ Poverty Line, June 2003, Single including housing \$296.60 per week, from <http://www1.ecom.unimelb.edu.au/iaesrwww/miesi/poverty.html>
- ³⁴ AIHW, Statistics on Drug Use in Australia, 2002
- ³⁵ AIHW, Statistics on Drug Use in Australia, 2001
- ³⁶ The Age, Melbourne, October 8, 2001
- ³⁷ Newspan, November 2002
- ³⁸ Newspan, November 2002
- ³⁹ Australian Temperament Survey by the Institute of Family Studies 2000
- ⁴⁰ Australian Electoral Commission
- ⁴¹ Domestic Issues Are Top Priority for Electors, Roy Morgan Research, June 12, 2003
- ⁴² Roy Morgan Research, 'Australians say homosexuality not immoral but Americans evenly divided', August 7, 2001
- ⁴³ The West Australian, 8 December 2001
- ⁴⁴ Privacy and the Community, Roy Morgan Research, July 2001
- ⁴⁵ Privacy and the Community, Roy Morgan Research, July 2001
- ⁴⁶ The Advertiser, 5/5/03



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