



WHERE TO NOW FOR THE MAJOR
POLITICAL PARTIES? REFLECTIONS
ON THE 2022 FEDERAL ELECTION

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Recurring themes

- Survey research shows the dynamic element in the election result was younger voters, suggesting a future of electoral volatility and further declining two-party hegemony
- Support for the Coalition was perilously weak support among well-educated, asset-poor young voters – especially women
- The Liberals also suffered a collapse in support among those with Chinese backgrounds, which may be easier to recover
- Despite winning the election, Labor's primary vote was down to a record low as it too shed support to the Greens and independents in inner metropolitan areas, and experienced patchy results elsewhere
- International resonances for Labor: the loss of the “red wall” in the UK and the increased vote for Donald Trump among Hispanics in 2020
- International resonances for Liberal: Conservative defeats in Canterbury and (in 2017) Kensington, shift away from the Republicans in affluent suburbs

The tools at our disposal

- YouGov conducted the Australian Cooperative Election Study survey of around 6000 respondents from May 2-18
- The Australian National University's Centre for Social Research and Methods conducted a two-wave study from a month before the election and immediately after, with about 3000 completing both surveys
- The largest campaign survey was YouGov's mid-campaign multi-level regression and post-stratification poll for The Australian, with a sample of nearly 19,000
- Market research firm SEC Newgate conducted a survey immediately after the election with a sample of about 1000
- As a consultant for Climate 200, I was privy to internal polling conducted by Redbridge Group/Community Engagement
- I have conducted ecological analyses using linear regression analysis of vote share at polling booth level and demographic data from surrounding polling booths

Age and gender

- The long-established age gap widened further: 34.5% of Coalition voters under 55 defected compared with 21% among the 55+¹
- However, Labor continues to lose young voters to the Greens²
- A now clearly established gender gap is likewise a function of age: the only cohort in which it was apparent was 18-34, among whom Labor scored 67.5% TPP among women and 60.3% among men³
- The flight to Greens and independents was driven by women⁴, although Climate 200 polling showed age, education and religiosity cleavages were more significant in the teal seats
- The largest movement recorded during the campaign period was from Labor to the Greens¹

1. Australian National University

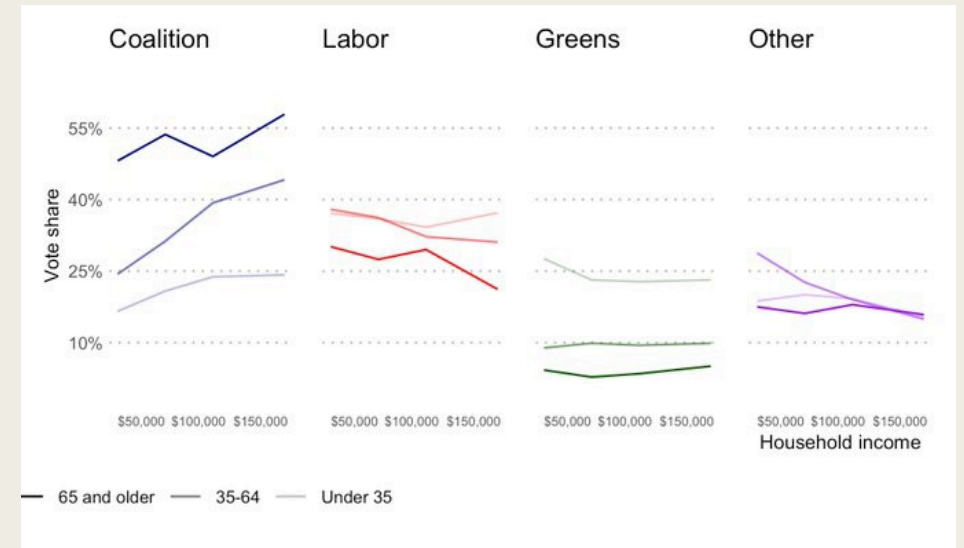
2. YouGov Cooperative Election Survey, reported in Crikey (August 12)

3. YouGov Cooperative Election Survey, reported in Crikey (September 2)

3. SEC Newgate

Education and income

- While much has been made of Labor gains from the Coalition among higher income earners, income did not have a significant effect on vote switching *independent of education*¹ (ANU)
- Those on high incomes were most likely to defect *from* Labor as well as *to* Labor – though more to the Greens and others than the Coalition² (YG-CES, Crikey 1)
- Labor remains markedly stronger than the Coalition among those in the lowest income quintile, which is also strong for Hanson and Palmer¹ (ANU)
- The income distinction is less apparent among those under 35³ (YG-MRP)



1. ANU

2. YouGov Cooperative Election Survey, reported in Crikey (August 12)

3. YouGov Multi-Level and Post-Stratification poll, reported in The Australian (June 7)

Property and assets

- Home-owners were nearly twice as likely as renters to vote Coalition after controlling for income, although home-owners under 35 were still more than twice as likely to vote Labor and Greens than Coalition¹
- Among home-owners on \$150,000 a year or more: Coalition 44%, Labor 31%, Greens 10%; among non-home owners on \$50,000 a year or less: Labor 40%, Greens 27%, Coalition 16%²
- Among those more likely to *defect* to Labor were those with few assets, together with the well-educated, those with no religion and non-English speakers (likely especially Chinese language speakers)³
- Conservative commentator Gray Connolly: “There is no future for conservatism unless more people have something of their own to conserve”⁴

1. YouGov Cooperative Election Study, reported in The Monthly (July 2022)

2. YouGov Multi-Level and Post-Stratification poll, reported in The Australian (June 7)

3. YouGov Cooperative Election Survey, reported in Crikey (August 12)

4. Gray Connolly, Sydney Morning Herald (May 20)

Ecological analysis

- Ecological analysis shows that for every extra \$1000 in an area's median household weekly income, the two-party swing from 2019 to 2022 at the local booth increased by 4%
- However, it also supports the finding of survey research that the operative variable was education rather than income
- Labor duly gained two-party vote share between 2016 and 2022 in seats that are affluent and well-educated, and contain large populations of people in their twenties
- In relative terms, Labor lost support in areas with families with children and – with the distinct exception of Chinese speakers in 2022 – non-English speakers
- Labor also lost primary vote in areas with low levels of religious observance, which is likely to have been to Greens and independents, returning to it as preferences

How this looks at seat level

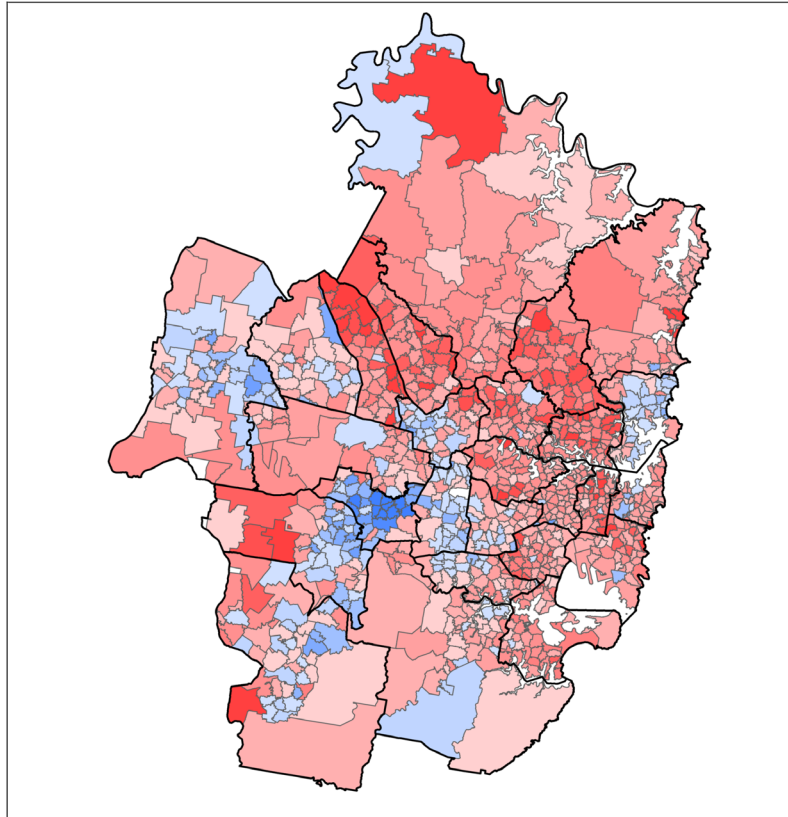
- Elections just got harder to predict: voters are responding to minor party and independent opportunities where they arise, but following old patterns where they do not
- There are 12 seats that would once have been categorised as blue-ribbon that the Liberals no longer hold, including three lost to Labor and one to the Greens
- Three of Labor's gains from the Liberals -- Chisholm in Melbourne and Bennelong and Reid in Sydney -- are Chinese community focal points with an increasingly young age profile
- Wild cards like Fowler, where independent Dai Le defeated Kristina Keneally, are likely to play out with increasing frequency
- Labor supported appeared to soften, without costing them seats, in areas that had been heavily affected by lockdowns – in Sydney as well as Melbourne
- The Greens' footprint in the large inner cities looks likely to expand, and there is also an opportunity for them in Richmond, encompassing Byron Bay
- Labor's danger on this score will be particularly acute when sitting members retire

The road back for the Liberals

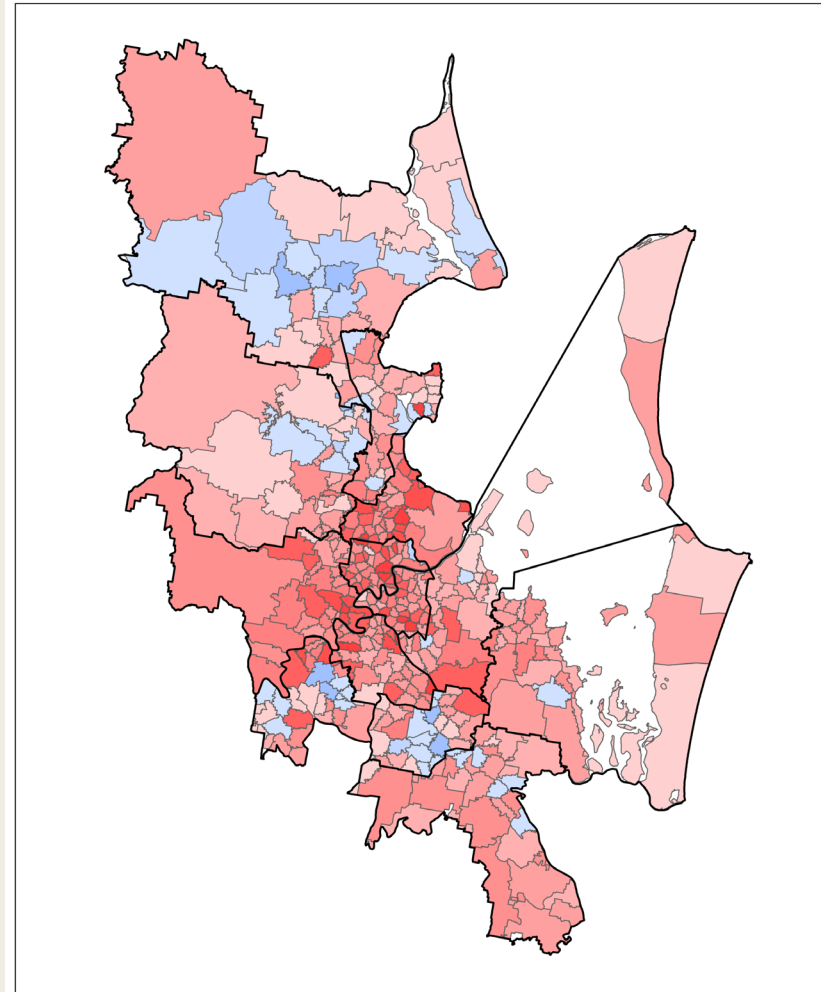
- The Liberals are divided as to whether seats where Labor is in decline constitute a more likely path back to power than recovering teal independent seats
- Other than Hunter, a once-safe Labor and now marginal mining electorate in New South Wales, credible targets for a "red wall" strategy to compensate for inner metropolitan losses are hard to identify, at least in the short term
- Advocates of such a strategy further nominate the metropolitan fringe seats of Werriwa in Sydney, Gorton in Melbourne and Blair in Brisbane
- The Liberals continue to hold low-to-middle income bellwethers including Lindsay in Sydney and Petrie and Longman in Brisbane
- Relatedly, classically marginal seats outside the inner metropolitan areas may become easier to win: Macarthur in Sydney and McEwen in Melbourne
- The Coalition now appears to have a secure hold on the regional Queensland seats of Capricornia and Herbert, which were once respectively safe Labor and marginal

Two-party swings colour-coded by booth

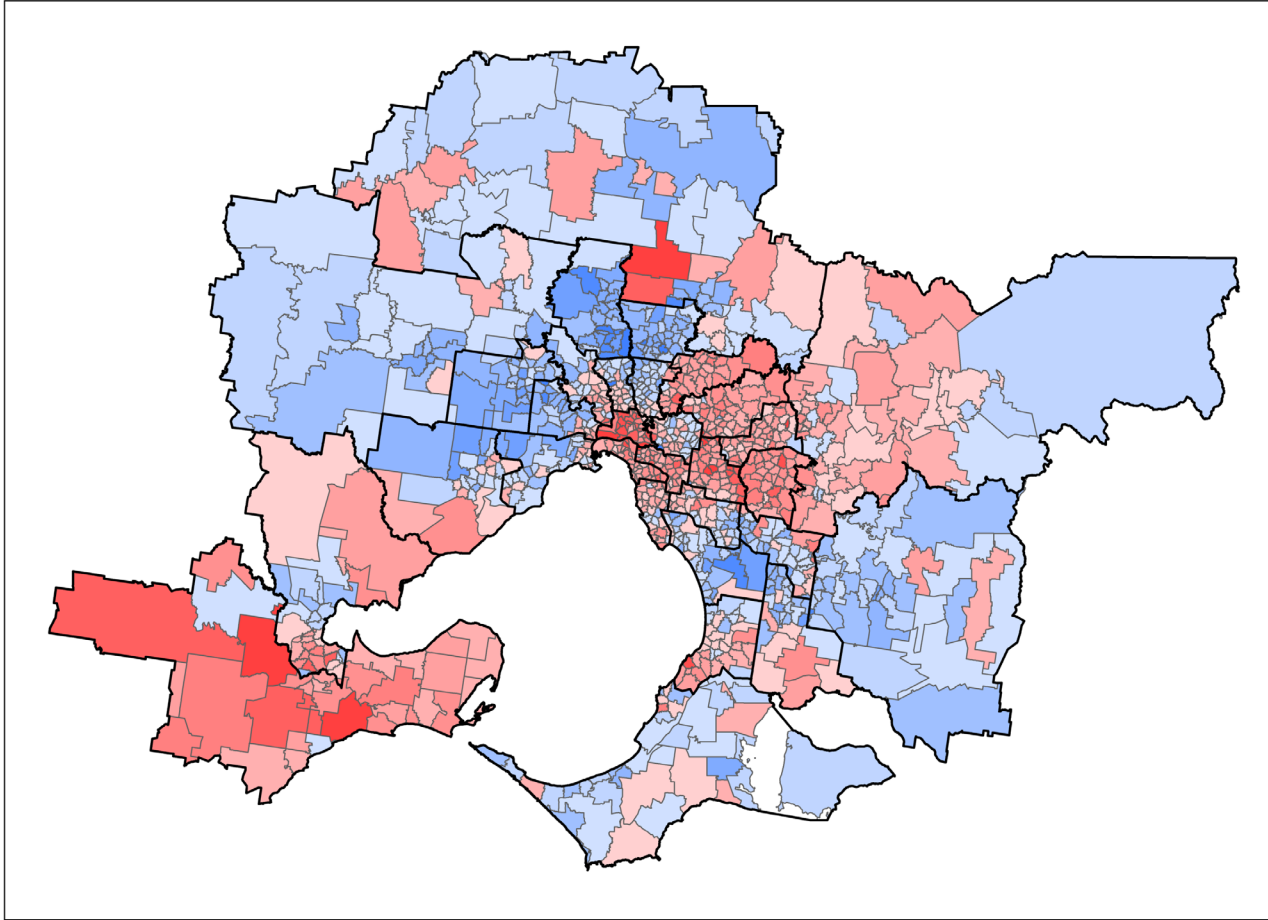
Sydney



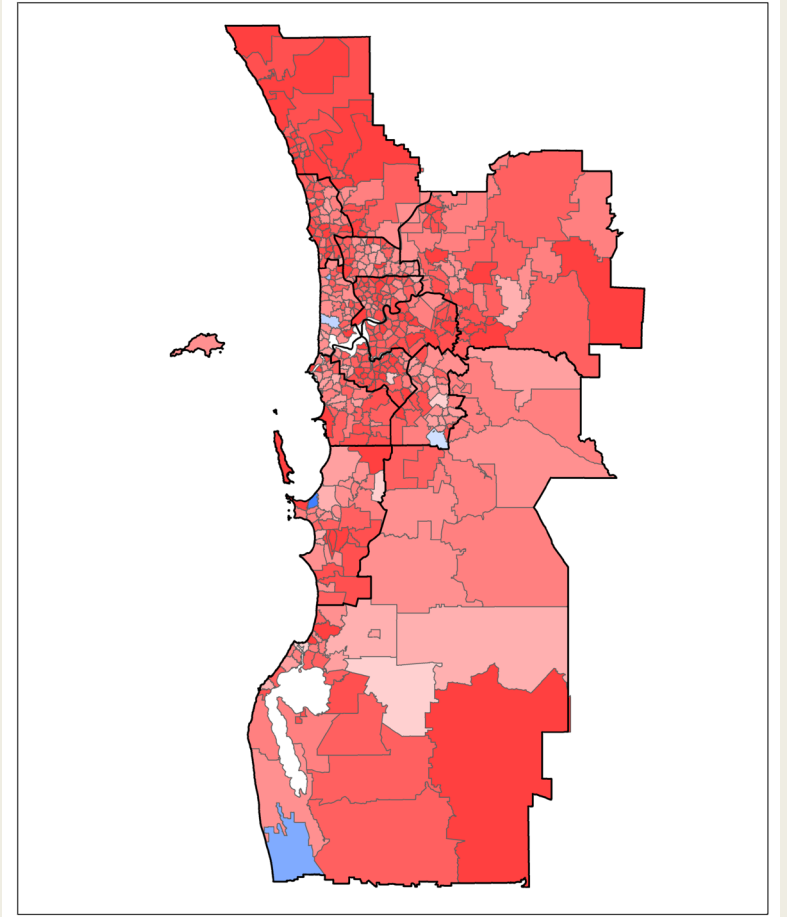
Brisbane



Melbourne



Perth



Regression analysis: booth results and demographics of surrounding areas

	Swing	LNC 2022	LNC 2019	GRN swing
Intercept	-0.03***	0.43***	0.40***	-0.01
Income	0.01***	0.11***	0.12***	-0.02***
Finished School	0.10***	-0.46***	-0.36***	0.06***
Family Households	-0.02*	0.10***	0.08***	0.02**
Owned Dwellings	0.01	0.36***	0.37***	-0.03***
Chinese language	0.17***	0.43***	0.59***	-0.06***
Other non-English	-0.12***	-0.05***	-0.17***	-0.02***
Age 18 to 30	0.03*	-0.04	-0.01	0.06***
VIC	-0.02***	-0.01***	-0.03***	0.00**
QLD	0.01***	0.06***	0.07***	0.01***
WA	0.07***	0.00	0.06***	0.00
SA	0.01***	0.02***	0.03***	0.01***
TAS	-0.04***	-0.07***	-0.12***	0.00
ACT	-0.01	-0.08***	-0.09***	-0.01*
NT	0.02*	0.00	0.02	0.01
Metro	0.00**	-0.11***	-0.12***	0.01***

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