Bibliographic citation
Bean, C. et al., Australian Election Study, 2004, [computer file]. Canberra: Australian Social Science Data Archive, The Australian National University, 2005.

Study Description

Abstract
The 2004 Australian Election Study is the seventh in a series of surveys beginning in 1987 that have been timed to coincide with Australian Federal elections. The series also builds on the 1967, 1969 and 1979 Australian Political Attitudes Surveys. The Australian Election Studies aim to provide a long-term perspective on stability and change in the political attitudes and behaviour of the Australian electorate, and investigate the changing social bases of Australian politics as the economy and society modernise and change character. In addition to these long-term goals they examine the political issues prevalent in the election and assess their importance for the election result.

The 2004 survey replicates many questions from the previous Australian Election Studies, but also introduces a variety of new questions including a section on political and global issues. Other sections cover the respondent's interest in the election campaign and politics, their past and present political affiliation, evaluation of parties and candidates, alignment with parties on various election issues, evaluation of the current economic situation, attitudes to a range of election issues including the immigration, refugees and asylum seekers, terrorism, taxation, unemployment, and interest rates, attitudes to issues relating to the environment and defence, and opinions on various social policy issues including abortion, equal opportunities, sex discrimination, and government assistance to Aborigines.

Background variables include level of education, employment status, occupation, type of employer, position at workplace, trade union membership, sex, age, own and parents' country of birth, parents' political preferences, religion, marital status, income, and where applicable, the occupation, trade union membership and political preference of the respondent's spouse.

Topic classification
Elections

Keyword
Attitudes
Defence
Economic policy
Elections
Environment
Ethnic groups
Immigration
International relations
Internet
Political parties
Politicians
Politics
Republicanism
Shares
Social policy
Taxation

Kind of data
Survey

Research instrument
structured

Collection dates
start: 2005-10-08
end: 2005-02-15

Data collector
Australian Social Science Data Archive

Nation
Australia

Geographic coverage
National

Geographic unit
Federal Electoral Division

Unit of analysis
Individual

Universe
persons on the Australian electoral roll at the close of rolls, September 2004

Method

Time dimension
cross-sectional (one-time) study - partial replication

Sampling procedure
Stratified systematic random sample. The sample of electors for all Australia was drawn from the Commonwealth Electoral Roll by the Australian Electoral Commission following the close of rolls for the 2004 election. The Commission supplied name and address information only, to be used only for this study. The sample was selected to be proportional to the population on a state by state basis.

Multi-stage sample. An additional random sample of electors in the Federal Divisions of Reid, Watson, Fowler, Holt, Gellibrand and Maribyrnong was also drawn from the Commonwealth Electoral Roll to boost numbers of respondents who were not born in Australia. These electorates were chosen as they have a high migrant population. The sample of 1500 was examined with regard to the perceived ethnic origin of the surnames on the list and 790 were selected to participate in the study on this basis. This sample is referred to as the Supplementary Sample.

Mode of data collection
self-completion (mail out - mail back)

Actions to minimise losses
A thankyou/reminder postcard was sent to all respondents and non-respondents eleven days after the original mail-out (19 October 2004). A second reminder letter and questionnaire were sent to remaining non-respondents four weeks after the original mail-out (10 November 2004). A final thankyou/reminder postcard was sent a month later (6 December 2004).

Controls on data collection
The survey booklets were entered in Microsoft Access with field restrictions to improve accuracy.

Cleaning operations
The data were checked for out of range codes and that the skip patterns were followed. In consultation with the Principal Investigators, these errors were corrected by the Australian Social Science Data Archive.

Response rate
Main Sample
Of a total mailing of 4250, there were 1769 completed returns giving a raw response rate was 42%. An adjusted response rate of 45% was calculated by removing the out of scope sample (deceased, incapable, return to sender, n=275).

Supplementary Sample
Of a total mailing of 790, there were 250 completed returns giving a raw response rate was 32%. An adjusted response rate of 35% was calculated by removing the out of scope sample (deceased, incapable, return to sender, n=69).

Data access

Collection size
Main sample: 1 data file + machine-readable documentation (rtf) + SPSS data definition statements;

Supplementary sample: 1 data file + machine-readable documentation (rtf) + SPSS data definition statements

Completeness
For confidentiality reasons the Postcode variable has been permanently embargoed.

The standard data set contains the main sample only. There is an additional data set that contains both the main sample and the supplementary sample.

Distributor
Australian Social Science Data Archive
The Australian National University
Web address: http://assda.anu.edu.au

Distribution date
2005-03-22

Version
First version
Version date: 2005-03-18

Confidentiality declaration required
A copy of the User Undertaking Form must be signed before the data can be accessed