The Australian Election Study
1987-2013

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Unbroken Time Series

• Currently 50 or so countries have a national election study

• But only eight have a longer continuous history than the AES:

  — Britain (from 1963)
  — Canada (from 1965)
  — Denmark (from 1971)
  — Germany (from 1969)
  — Netherlands (from 1967)
  — Sweden (from 1956)
  — United States (from 1948)
Early Election Studies in Australia 1967-79

- **1967**: personal interview, n=2,054. Response rate 80.5%

- **1969**: personal interview, mainly 1967-69 panel, n=1,873. Response rate 77.6%

- **1979**: personal interview, n=2,016. Response rate 82.0%
## Australian Election Study, 1987-2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total sample</th>
<th>Moved/gone away</th>
<th>Refusals/ non-responses</th>
<th>Valid responses</th>
<th>Effective response (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>3,061</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>1,080</td>
<td>1,825</td>
<td>62.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>3,606</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>1,461</td>
<td>2,020</td>
<td>58.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>4,950</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>1,790</td>
<td>3,023</td>
<td>62.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>1,110</td>
<td>1,795</td>
<td>61.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>3,502</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>1,391</td>
<td>1,896</td>
<td>57.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>369</td>
<td>1,621</td>
<td>2,010</td>
<td>55.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>4,250</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>2,206</td>
<td>1,769</td>
<td>44.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>2,790</td>
<td>1,873</td>
<td>40.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>5,200</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>2,714</td>
<td>2,061</td>
<td>41.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>12,200</td>
<td>522</td>
<td>7,723</td>
<td>3,955</td>
<td>33.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The response rate is estimated as: valid responses/(total sample–moved or gone away). The 2010 response rate is the figure for the initial self-completion sample.
Australian Election Study Themes

- 1987: The economy
- 1990: The environment and environmentalism
- 1993: Political culture
- 1996: National identity and citizenship
- 1998: Constitution, rights and minorities
- 1999: Constitutional referendum
- 2001: Challenges to governance
- 2004: The decline of political parties
- 2007: Democracy and representation
- 2010: The dynamics of political choice.
- 2013: Volatility and electoral change
## Australian Candidate Study, 1987-2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Election candidates</th>
<th>Australian Candidate Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>House of</td>
<td>Senate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Representatives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>613</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>782</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>943</td>
<td>266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>908</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>1,039</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>1,091</td>
<td>330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>1,054</td>
<td>367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>849</td>
<td>349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>1,188</td>
<td>529</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 1987 election was a double dissolution election for the Senate. Other elections are half-Senate. The response rate is estimated as valid responses/total contacted.
AES Methodology

- National, post-election self-completion survey
- Sample drawn randomly from electoral register
- 2010 and 2013 online option added
- Data publicly available as unit record file
- Online analysis facility also available
- Highly cost efficient, comparative costs per interview (≈USD):
  - AES (2013) $60
  - BES (2010) $300
  - ANES (2012, internet) $270
  - ANES (2012, face to face) $2,100
Response Rate Trends, Voters and Candidates

![Chart](chart.png)
The 2013 Australian Election Study

• Combines two project grants:
  — *2013 Australian Election Study: Volatility and Social Change* (PIs Clive Bean, Ian McAllister, Juliet Pietsch, Rachel Gibson)
  — *Political Participation and Electoral Representation Among First and Second Generation Immigrants to Australia* (PIs Ian McAllister, Toni Makkai, Juliet Pietsch)

• N of respondents 3,955

• Mean respondents per electorate 26 (range 12 to 42)
Future Issues

- Survey methodology (mail vs online etc):
- Arresting response rate decline
- Feasibility of the candidates survey
- Cost considerations (mail still low cost ≈ $60 per interview)