

Essential Report Post-Election Methodology Review

Following the May 2022 Federal Election, we undertook an extensive review of our online survey methodology as well as our sampling and weighting regimes. We believe that all pollsters should take the opportunity to review their methodologies after Federal Elections, as they provide something close to a real-world test.

The 2022 Federal Election results indicated that, while our overall 2PP was close to the final result, there were issues with the primary vote. Specifically, both major parties had lower primary votes than our poll suggested, while the independents were higher.

Our review found that our sampling regime is robust: that is, in demographic terms our sampling regime accurately reflects Australian Census figures. Our target weights have been updated to match the latest 2021 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census.

The key change resulting from the review is that we have decided to stop weighting by Party ID and instead added previous vote to the weight (including whether they were eligible to vote in 2022 or not). In addition, whereas the Party ID question was at the end of the survey, the previous vote questions are at the beginning.

Party ID has traditionally been very useful as a weighting variable, and at elections such as 2016 our final poll was very close to the actual result. The reason Party ID has historically been used as a weighting variable is that it been assumed to be consistent over time. The results of the 2022 Australian election in particular suggest that that is increasingly not the case – Australians identify with specific parties less than they used to, as reflected in the rise of third party and independent vote. The effect of weighting by Party ID in 2022 was to weight up the major parties and weight down minor parties and the independents.

We have tested our updated methodology extensively and are confident that it is an improvement. We will only know, however, if the decisions made in 2022 are still valid in 2025 after the next election. We expect to retain this new methodology through until 2025, but in the event that future evidence indicate that it should be changed, we undertake to announce those changes when they happen.

