

Opinion Poll Report: Comparison of Voting Intentions as at 1 December 2003

This Research Note compares the political opinion polls results of two polling organisations: Newspoll and Roy Morgan Research [Morgan] since June 2001. Another major pollster, ACNielsen, is not included because its political polling is not currently as regular as the two examined.¹ The Note will be updated regularly to incorporate the latest results. It is published in conjunction with another Research Note examining the issues that voters rank as important and the party that voters prefer to handle these issues.

The Australian reports Newspoll's figures and both Morgan and Newspoll attract considerable attention across the media. Poll results usually are reported in text and/or tables, but this Note will present them as graphs, allowing an easier comparison of the figures. As most polls generally are reported in isolation rather than together, this regular comparative publication will be a useful addition to the columns already devoted to polls.²

Future editions of this publication will touch briefly on some of the major events that may affect poll results. In this issue, however, we offer only a preliminary comparison of poll statistics from June 2001, graphing first the results of each poll for the primary vote, then the results of the polls by party and finally the results for two-party preferred.

Note that the pollsters use different methods to calculate the two-party preferred result. Newspoll measures only primary votes and notionally distributes according to preference flows at the last election; Morgan

measures full preferences. The problem with notional distribution is that it cannot account for significant shifts in voter preferences since the last election; that is, voters may have altered their preferences since the last election in response to major events or changes within parties (such as leadership).

1. For further information on the poll results, contact Greg Baker, of the Statistics Group. The figures will be posted on the Intranet.
2. This is not to argue that polls are never compared. Reuters, for example, has in the past examined trends across the polls.

Figure 1. Newspoll: primary vote, all parties

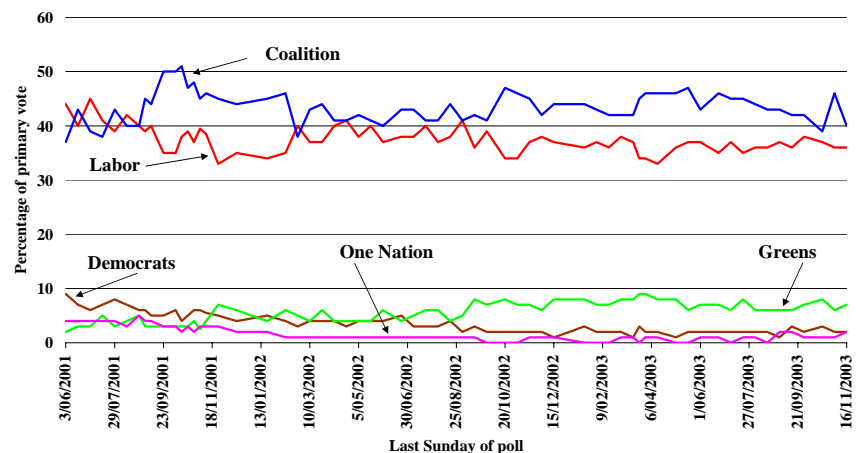
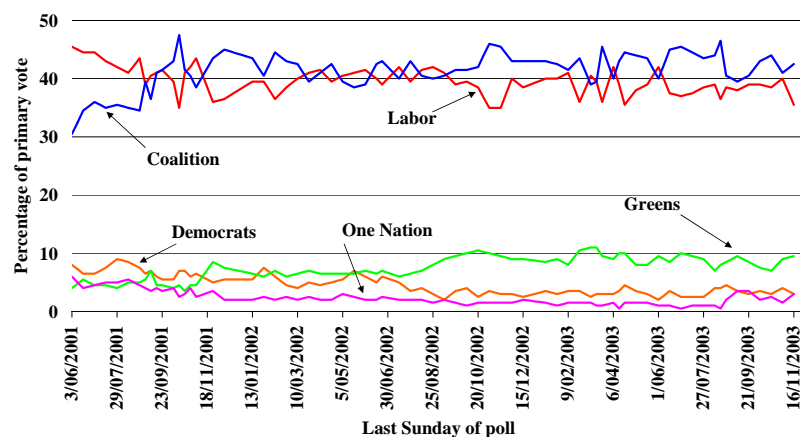


Figure 2. Morgan: primary vote, all parties



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Figure 3. Coalition: Newspoll and Morgan

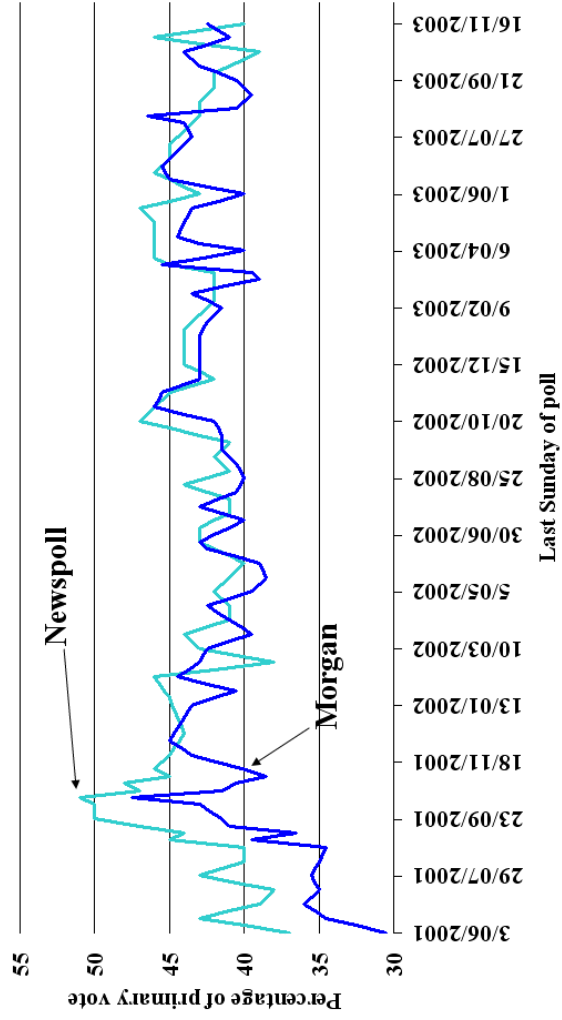


Figure 4. Labor: Newspoll and Morgan

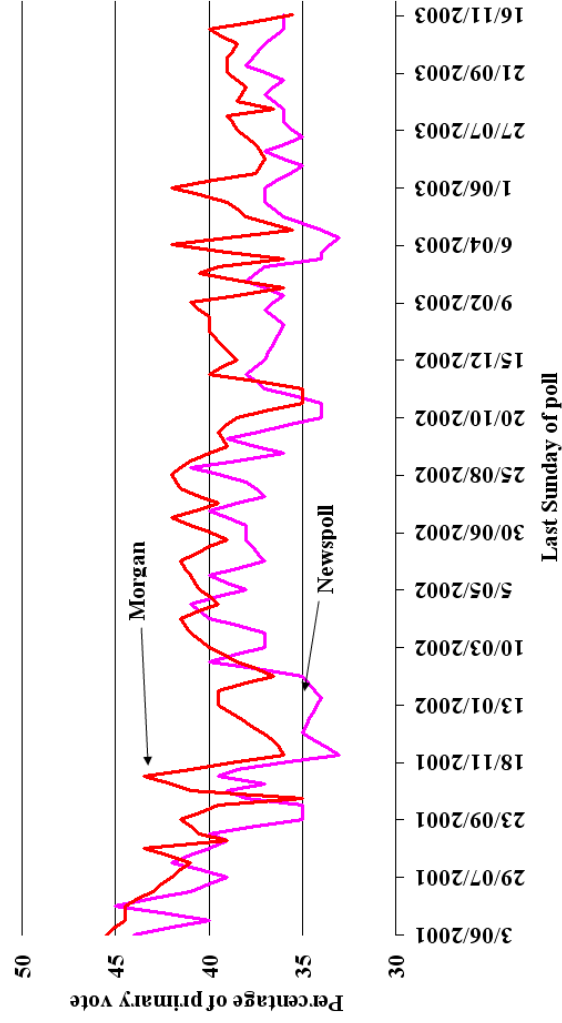


Figure 5. Minor parties: Newspoll and Morgan

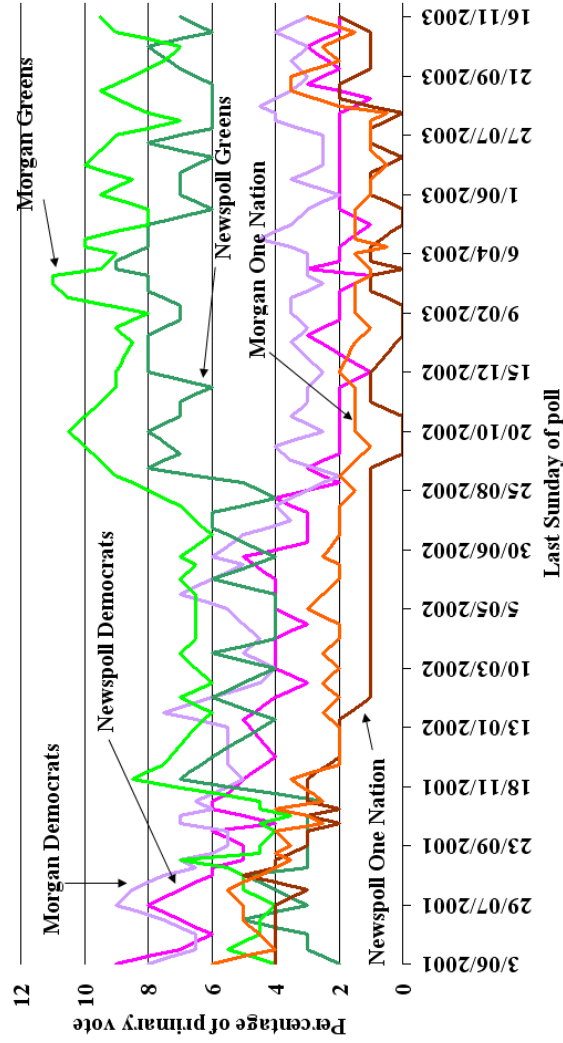


Figure 6. Two party preferred: Newspoll and Morgan

