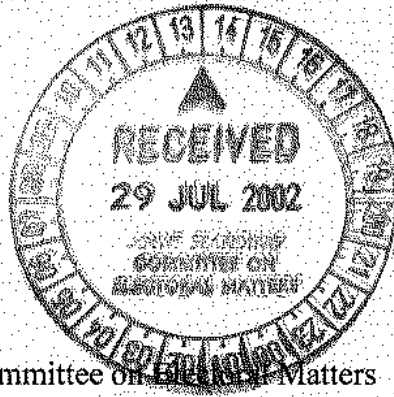




Electoral Commissioner



West Block
Parkes ACT 2600
PO Box E201
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Telephone (06) 271 4400
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Mr Trevor Rowe
Secretary, Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Mr Rowe

INQUIRY INTO THE ANAO AUDIT REPORT NO. 42 2001-02: INTEGRITY OF THE ELECTORAL ROLL: SUBMISSION

Please find enclosed a copy of the AEC's submission to the JSCEM's inquiry into ANAO Audit Report No. 42 2001-02: Integrity of the Electoral Roll.

The submission provides replies to matters taken on notice at the public hearing as part of this inquiry on 17 June 2002. The AEC will be happy to respond to any further questions the JSCEM may wish to ask as part of this inquiry.

Please contact Gabrielle Paten on (02) 6271 4480 if you wish to discuss this matter further.

Yours sincerely

Andy Becker
Electoral Commissioner

Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters	
Submission No.	1
Date Received	29/7/02
Secretary	G. Paten

29 July 2002

Matters arising from the public hearing with JSCEM on 17 June 2002 as part of the inquiry into the ANAO Audit Report No. 42 2001-02: Integrity of the electoral roll

1. Introduction

1.1 This submission by the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) is presented to the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters (JSCEM) to provide responses to matters taken on notice at the public hearing with the JSCEM on 17 June 2002.

1.2 The matters identified by both the AEC and the JSCEM for response by the AEC were:

- How many 18 year olds enrolled for the 2001 federal election between the issue of the writs and the close of the roll? (p10 of the hearing transcript)
- On average over a year, how many residences are doorknocked as part of the Continuous Roll Update (CRU)? What are the procedures that lead to a targeted doorknock of a residence? (p18 of the transcript)
- Can the AEC inform the JSCEM of the funding requirements and the time frame for the implementation of the 12 ANAO recommendations? (p19 of the transcript)
- Can the AEC categorise the groups of people identified by the AEC's quarterly market research surveys as being eligible to be on the roll but that are not on the roll? Do the surveys allow for a gender breakdown of these people, for example? (pp21-22 of the transcript)

2. Enrolment transactions for 18 year olds between the issue of the writs and the close of the roll

2.1 This information is still to be obtained and will be provided shortly.

3. Targeted doorknocking as part of the Continuous Roll Update.

3.1 Field work is targeted at addresses where there has been no response to a letter sent out as a result of CRU activity. Some CRU mail out facilities allow for a reminder letter to be sent out before 'non-responding' addresses are subject to targeted field work. It is intended that the facility for reminder letters be added to all mail out types.

3.2 In 2000-2001 over half a million addresses were doorknocked in all States (except South Australia) and in the ACT. South Australia undertook its own doorknock in early 2001-2002 at nearly 25,000 addresses. In the Northern Territory, in addition to 'non-responding' field work, high turnover, new growth areas, and remote communities are also targeted.

3.3 In 2001-2002, new rounds of targeted field work were commenced in Western Australia and Queensland, but stopped with the pending election and the possibility of new enrolment forms resulting from the proclamation of the

relevant provisions of the *Electoral and Referendum Amendment Act (No 1) 1999*.

3.4 With the fuller implementation of the CRU program and the absence of a federal electoral event, it is intended that non-response field work be undertaken twice a year, with a first letter then a reminder letter being sent before the address is doorknocked.

4. Implementation of the ANAO recommendations

4.1 Table A below details the AEC's latest information on the funding requirements and the time frame for the implementation of the 12 ANAO recommendations.

Table A: Funding requirements and time frame for the implementation of the ANAO recommendations

Rec No	Subject	AEC Response	Status
1	<p>To achieve a consistent approach across all States and Territories in managing the electoral roll, the ANAO recommends that the AEC develop a strategic plan for the CRU that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sets out national standards for updating the electoral roll; • identifies and addresses gaps in the existing CRU program; and • sets a timetable for implementation of a consistent national CRU program. 	Agreed	<p>The AEC has identified enrolment and CRU as strategic priorities in the current AEC strategic plan. The first priority is to develop a CRU strategic plan in consultation with the Electoral Council of Australia (ECA). Work on this plan will commence in August/September with an aim to complete it by the end of 2002 subject to agreement by the ECA. The development of the plan is not expected to incur additional costs. However, the implementation of the plan will incur costs. The costs for implementation will not be known until the plan is developed and proposed work is scoped.</p>

Rec No	Subject	AEC Response	Status
2	<p>To maximise the benefits of its data-matching activities in maintaining the electoral roll, the ANAO recommends that the AEC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • determine an optimal suite of data required to implement an effective national CRU program; • monitor data sources used for CRU to ensure the most effective sources are identified and used; and • monitor enrolments obtained from non-CRU activities to identify potential gaps in data-matching coverage. 	Agreed	<p>The proposed CRU strategic plan will address the issue of maximising the benefits of data matching activities to ensure an optimum suite of data is sourced and used to obtain the most effective results in implementing an effective CRU program.</p> <p>Evaluation of the current data sets has not identified sufficient overlap to conclude which data sets are optimal at the exclusion of others. As each new data source comes online further evaluations are undertaken. It is expected that it will take about 18 months to identify, source and evaluate the different data sources for this activity. It is proposed that the Management Information Systems will be enhanced to streamline this process. However, until system enhancements are specified it is not possible to identify the likely costs of implementing this process.</p>
3	<p>To improve the effectiveness of the CRU program, the ANAO recommends that the AEC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify more effective arrangements to progress negotiations with States and Territories for access to relevant data; and • actively pursue access to all data sets that it considers essential to ensure efficient and effective management of the Commonwealth roll. 	Agreed	<p>These initiatives will be pursued by the AEC during renegotiation of the Joint Roll Arrangements with the States and Territories and during the development of the CRU strategic plan. It is not expected that there will be costs in managing the negotiations. However, the significant costs that are likely to occur in obtaining the data are not known at this stage.</p>

Rec No	Subject	AEC Response	Status
4	<p>To improve the effectiveness of its correspondence with electors, the ANAO recommends that the AEC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review and revise, as appropriate, CRU correspondence to electors; and • include in future correspondence reference to a citizen's legal obligations to enrol to vote and the penalties that apply for non-compliance. 	Agreed	<p>Funding has already been allocated for a review of all Enrolment and CRU forms and letters to commence in August this year with an expected completion by mid 2003.</p> <p>Consideration will be given to including information about a citizen's legal obligation to enrol and vote, the penalties that apply for non-compliance, and access to roll data, on the relevant forms and letters during the planned review. The costs associated with this initiative will not be significant.</p>
5	<p>To enhance AEC ability to use its existing information on the electoral roll better and manage the roll more efficiently and effectively, the ANAO recommends that the AEC upgrade its Management Information Systems to enable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • measuring and reporting of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the accuracy, completeness and validity of the electoral roll; - the accuracy of the address register; and - the cost of its various enrolment activities; and • monitoring of the implementation and impact of initiatives, such as CRU. 	Agreed	<p>The AEC has identified the enhancement of its Management Information Systems as a priority for this financial year. Work has commenced on developing the specifications with the first stage of the development expected to be completed by mid 2003. The full cost of the enhancements will not be known until the specifications have been completed and the scoping undertaken.</p>

Rec No	Subject	AEC Response	Status
6	<p>To improve accountability, and to provide greater assurance that the electoral roll is being managed effectively, the ANAO recommends that the AEC identify and implement a suite of performance indicators that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are relevant and appropriate for measuring enrolment activities; • contain both qualitative and quantitative measures; and • address the needs of the different stakeholders of the AEC. 	Agreed	<p>The AEC recognises the need for improved performance indicators and identified this need in Strategy 1 of the AEC's 2001-2004 Strategic Plan. The review of the performance indicators and proposed measures will commence later this year with the aim to include them in the next budgetary cycle. The review will also look at integrating the measures into the proposed enhancements of the Management Information System. Costs associated with the collection of data for these future performance indicators could be significant. The AEC will advise the JSCEM of estimated costs in due course.</p>
7	<p>To improve and strengthen its relationships with key stakeholders, the ANAO recommends that the AEC give priority to consultation with, and obtaining feedback from, key stakeholders, and that it develop appropriate strategies and procedures for conducting, managing and reporting on these relationships through its corporate planning and performance reporting frameworks.</p>	Agreed	<p>The AEC's relationship with State and Territory electoral bodies is maintained by regular consultation and quarterly meetings with the ECA. A subcommittee of the ECA also meets regularly. Other meetings with our State/Territory counterparts are held to discuss Joint Roll Arrangements. The AEC also identified the need to conduct customer/stakeholder workshops when the AECs 2001-2004 Strategic Plan was developed. A number of customer workshops have already been held and a stakeholder workshop has been proposed for this financial year. These workshops will enable the AEC to obtain feedback on the AEC's performance as a service provider.</p>

Rec No	Subject	AEC Response	Status
8	<p>To assist in its management of the accuracy of electoral roll, the ANAO recommends that the AEC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop and introduce performance indicators to measure accuracy of the electoral roll; • develop measurable targets for roll accuracy; and • report those targets and indicators in its Annual Report. 	Agreed	The AEC has already identified the need to improve its performance indicators and has planned to have the revised indicators completed by March 2003.
9	To measure the accuracy of the electoral roll, the ANAO recommends that the AEC consider introducing a periodic review of a sample of the electoral roll.	Agreed	The AEC will examine appropriate methodologies for conducting a periodic review of a sample of the electoral roll to provide an assessment of roll accuracy. Costs associated with such a review could be significant depending on the type and size of the sample on which the review is undertaken.

Rec No	Subject	AEC Response	Status
10	<p>To improve the reliability and completeness of the electoral roll, the ANAO recommends that, in 2002-2003, the AEC focus its enrolment efforts on improving the completeness aspects of the electoral roll by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identifying groups where non-enrolment is most prevalent; and • developing effective strategies to improve enrolment by these groups. 	Agreed	<p>The AEC has a focus on accuracy and completeness and is continually looking for methodologies to improve both. The AEC expects to obtain relevant ABS demographic data by end 2002. Analysis of this data will then proceed with the aim of identifying areas to be targeted by each Division. The AEC's Divisions are developing business plans, which will include strategies for improving enrolment participation in these areas. The enhancement to our Management Information Systems will streamline the analysis of the data to expedite the identification of areas to target. Costs are yet to be identified, but will be provided to the JSCEM when they are available.</p>
11	<p>To minimise the risk of enrolment fraud, the ANAO recommends that the AEC give high priority to finalising and implementing its fraud control plan specific to enrolment activities.</p>	Agreed	<p>The AEC has already identified this as a priority for 2002-03. The process will start with an examination of the current processes and procedures commencing in early August with an aim to finalise development of an enrolment fraud control plan by early 2003.</p>

Rec No	Subject	AEC Response	Status
12	<p>To assess and to minimise risks to the integrity of the roll arising from new technology and increased access to roll data, the ANAO recommends that the AEC give priority to completion of its review of ss 89 to 92 of the <i>Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918</i>, recommended by the JSCEM, taking into account the extent of current electronic access to electoral roll data, and effectively assessing and treating the risks inherent in current development in computer technology.</p>	Agreed	<p>The review of ss. 89 – 92 has been included in the July 2002 submission to the JSCEM. No significant costs are envisaged if the recommended legislative changes are made.</p>

5. Demographics of people who are eligible to be on the roll but are not on the roll.

5.2 The AEC is able to categorise the groups of people identified by the AEC's quarterly market research surveys as being eligible to be on the roll but that are not on the roll. However, the quarterly market research surveys only cover a small number of demographic indicators, which limits the number of categories that can be identified.

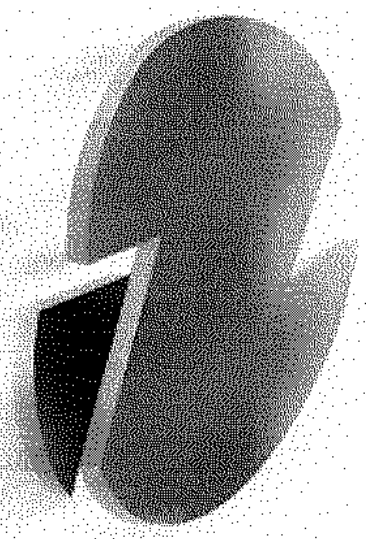
5.3 The survey asks two screening questions – 'Are you an Australian citizen?' and 'Are you enrolled to vote at your current address in Australian federal or state elections?' The data collected is based on these two screening questions. The data cross tabulated by these two questions are:

- the gender of the respondent;
- the age of the respondent;
- whether they are a grocery buyer;
- whether the household contains children;
- the respondent's marital status;
- work status (full time or part time);
- geographic area of residence;
- socio-economic status;
- the age the respondent left school; and
- the household income.

5.4 A sample of the survey is attached for your information.

5.5 The following are some of the results of the surveys. These are the average of figures taken between June 2001 and March 2002 and are based only on those survey respondents who are Australian citizens:

- a slightly lower percentage of females (5%) compared with males (6%) were not enrolled at their current address;
- only 2% of eligible people over the age of 50 were not enrolled at their current address compared with 18% of persons aged 18-24 years;
- more unmarried people (9%) were not enrolled at their current address than married people (3%); and
- Western Australia had the highest percentage (9%) of persons not enrolled at their current address.



March 2002

Job No: 020301

Enrolment Study – Cumulative Report

Prepared for

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Background and objectives

- This report summarises the results of an ongoing tracking study for the AUSTRALIAN ELECTORAL COMMISSION designed to monitor the levels of voting enrolment among Australian adults.
- This tracking study was conducted once each month between November 1997 and September 1999. At the end of this period the Australian Electoral Commission requested a less frequent tracking period and as a result the research changed to quarterly waves.
- This report consists of summary graphs and comments on the main research findings for results since tracking commenced in November 1997. The graphs and discussion include separate results for the first three six monthly reporting periods, the period spanning seven waves between May 1999 and March 2000, and then the two annual cumulative reporting periods thereafter.
- Following this, the report contains detailed results in the form of computer tables for the current research wave, March 2002 and the cumulative results of the latest four waves. Detailed computer table results for previous waves of this study were included in earlier reports.



Methodology

Sample

- Each wave of this study was conducted nationally among 1200 respondents aged 18 years and over.
- Respondents were selected by means of a stratified random sample process which included:
 - a quota set for each capital city and non-capital city area. Within each of these areas a quota set for each telephone area code;
 - random selection of household telephone numbers drawn from current telephone listings for each area code;
 - random selection of an individual in each household by a "last birthday" screening question.

Interviewing

- Interviewing for the March 2002 wave was conducted by telephone over the period of 1-3 March 2002 by fully trained and personally briefed interviewers. Previous quarterly tracking waves were conducted on the following dates: 1-3 June 2001, 31 August – 2 September 2001, 30 November – 2 December 2001.
- To ensure the sample included those people who tend to spend a lot of time away from home, a system of call backs and appointments was incorporated.

Weighting

- To reflect the population distribution, results were post-weighted to Australian Bureau of Statistics data on age, age left school, sex and area.

Summary of main findings

Australian Citizenship

As per previous cumulative periods, 94% of adults aged 18 years and over claim to be an Australian citizen. This figure has remained unchanged since tracking commenced in 1997.

Detailed analysis indicates there are no major differences in the level of citizenship by demographic factors. However those living in Western Australia continue to be slightly less likely to be Australian citizens, as are those living in the combined five major capital cities.

Voting Enrolment

Among Australian citizens, 95% claim to be enrolled to vote at their current address. This figure remains at it's equal highest level, and is likely to have been sustained by the media campaign and associated activity in the lead up to the recent federal election, which took place in November 2001.

Those aged 35 years and over continue to be the most likely to be enrolled, whilst 18-24 year olds remain by far the least likely. There is evidence to suggest that enrolment in Western Australia has declined, falling by 5 points to 91%. Historically enrolment in this state has been marginally less stable than in any other state throughout this tracking study.



Australian Citizenship

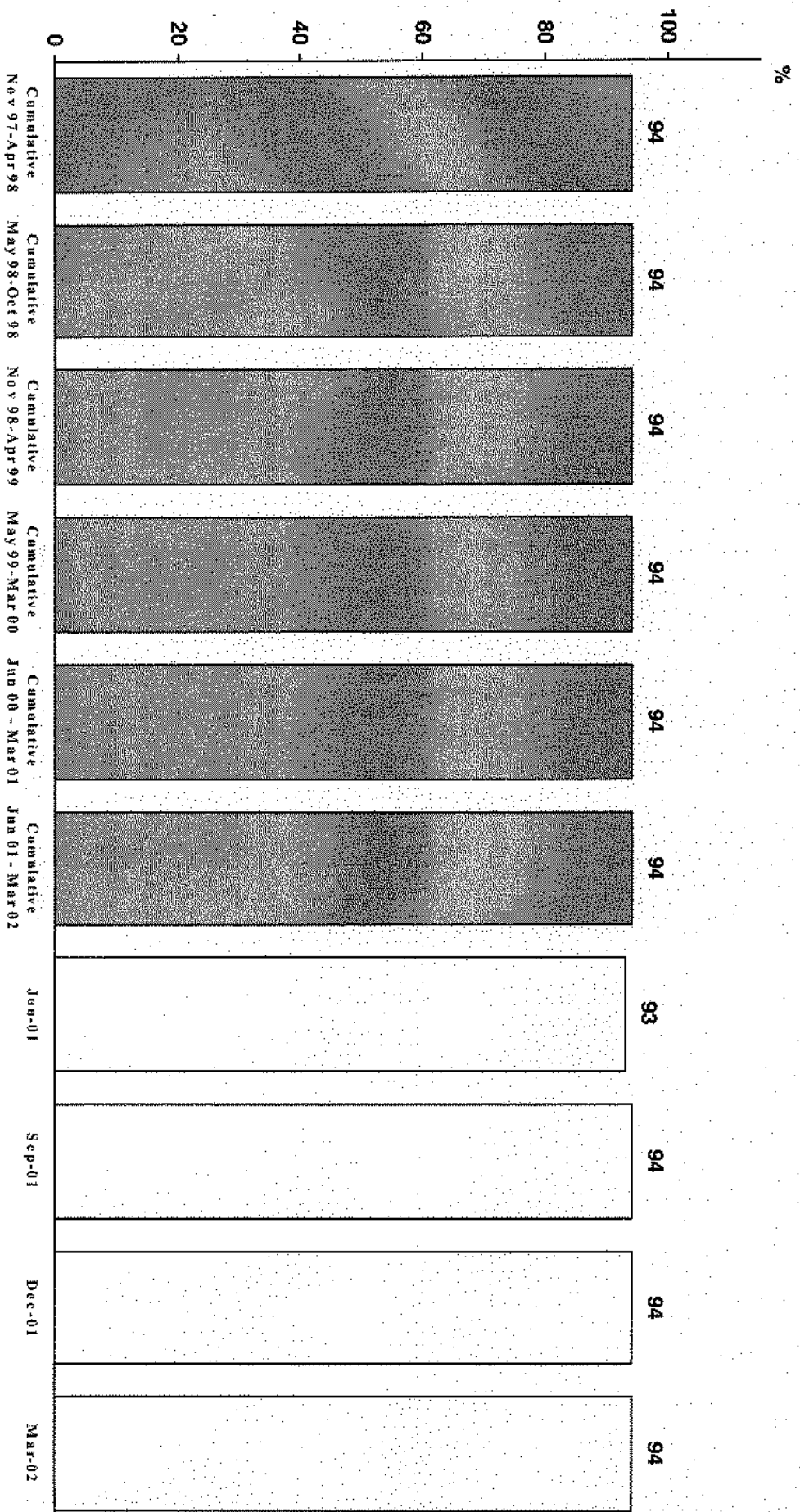


Figure 1

Base: Australian adults aged 18 years and over (n=7200, 7200, 7200, 8400, 4800, 4800 cumulative, 1200 per wave)

Australian Citizenship

By demographics

	Nov 97 - Apr 98	May 98 - Oct 98	Nov 98 - Apr 99	May 99 - Mar 00	Jun 00 - Mar 01	Jun 01 - Mar 02
TOTAL ADULTS	94	94	94	94	94	94
Male	94	94	93	94	93	93
Female	94	94	94	94	94	94
18-24	94	94	94	94	94	94
25-34	94	93	94	92	91	92
35-49	94	95	94	93	93	93
50+	95	94	94	95	94	95
Married	94	94	93	93	93	93
Not Married	94	94	95	94	94	94
Full time / Part time	94	94	94	93	93	93
Not Working	93	93	94	94	94	94
Capital City	92	93	93	93	93	92
X-City	96	96	96	95	95	97
New South Wales	94	94	94	93	94	93
Victoria	93	93	93	94	93	93
Queensland	95	95	95	94	95	95
South Australia	95	95	94	95	96	95
Western Australia	92	92	91	92	91	92
Tasmania	97	97	97	97	95	96
White	94	94	94	94	94	93
Blue	94	94	94	94	94	94
16 years or less	93	94	94	94	94	94
17+ years	93	93	94	93	93	93
Less than \$60,000*	94*	94*	94*	94	94	94
\$60,000 or more*	94*	94*	93*	93	92	93

*Note: Nov 97 - Apr 98, May 98 - Oct 98 and Nov 98 - Apr 99 cumulative waves analysed using income brackets less than \$50,000 and \$50,000 or more

Figure 2

Base: Australian adults aged 18 years and over (n=7200, 7200, 7200, 8400, 4800, 4800 cumulative)



Enrolled to vote at current address

Among Australian citizens

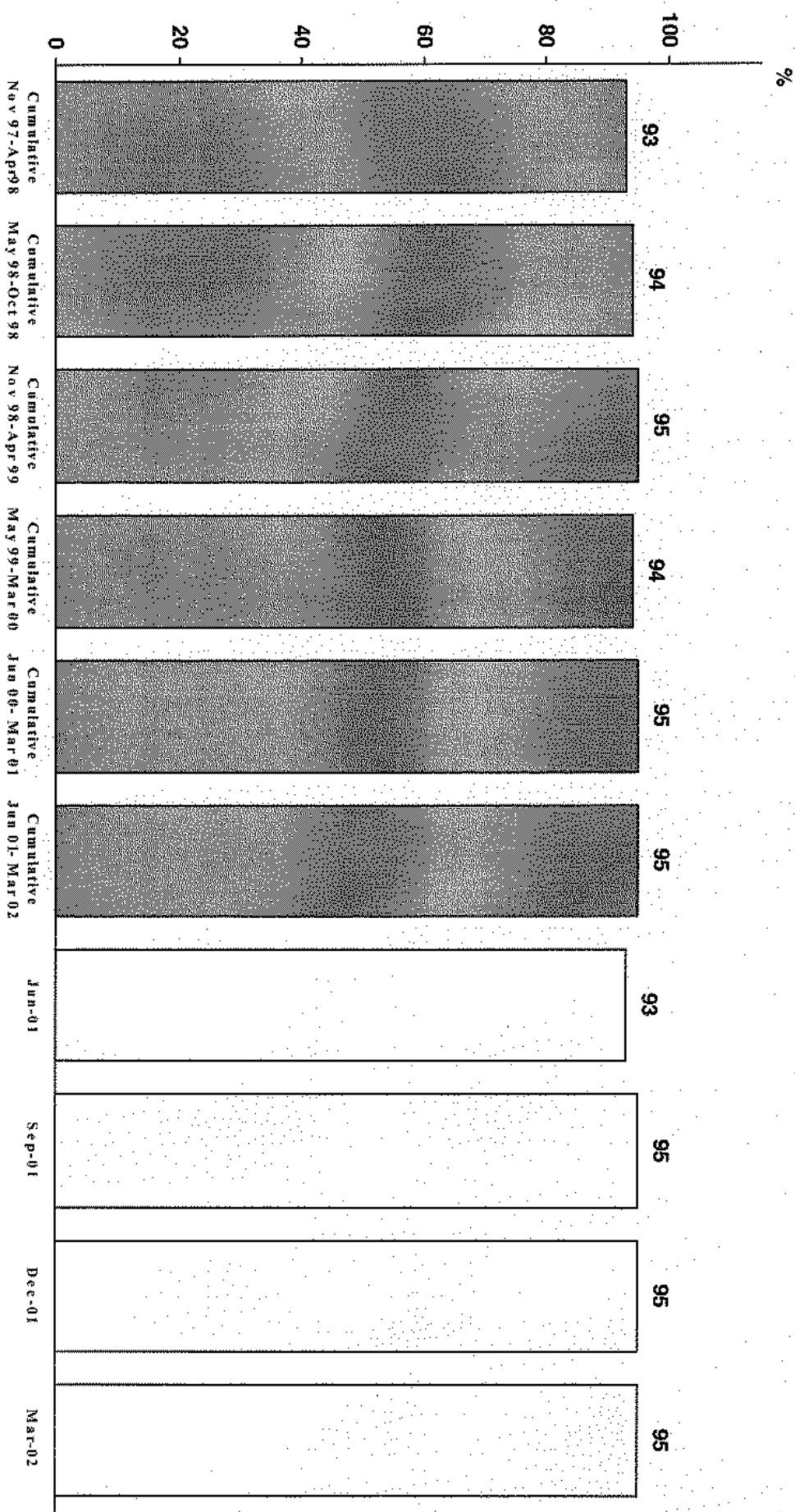


Figure 3

Base: Australian citizens aged 18 years and over (n=6763, 6771, 6753, 7859, 4490, 4499 cumulative, 1122, 1130, 1120, 1127 per wave)

Enrolled at current address Among Australian citizens By demographics

	Nov 97 - Apr 98	May 98 - Oct 98	Nov 98 - Apr 99	May 99 - Mar 00	Jun 00 - Mar 01	Jun 01 - Mar 02
TOTAL CITIZENS	93	94	95	94	95	95
Male	93	94	94	93	94	94
Female	93	95	96	95	95	95
18-24	78	82	82	78	84	82
25-34	90	91	93	92	91	92
35-49	97	96	97	97	97	97
50+	98	99	99	98	99	98
Married	96	97	98	96	97	97
Not Married	89	90	91	90	92	91
Full time / Part time	92	93	95	93	94	94
Not Working	95	96	95	94	96	96
Capital City	92	94	95	94	95	94
X-City	95	95	95	94	95	95
New South Wales	93	95	96	94	95	95
Victoria	93	94	95	95	94	95
Queensland	93	93	93	92	94	94
South Australia	95	94	96	95	95	96
Western Australia	93	94	95	92	96	91
Tasmania	97	96	96	97	98	96
White	93	94	95	94	95	94
Blue	93	94	95	94	94	95
16 years or less	95	96	96	96	96	95
17+ years	91	92	93	91	93	93
Less than \$60,000*	94*	94*	95*	94	95	95
\$60,000 or more*	92*	95*	96*	95	95	94

Note: Nov 97 - Apr 98, May 98 - Oct 98 and Nov 98 - Apr 99 cumulative waves analysed using income brackets less than \$50,000 and \$50,000 or more

Figure 4

Base: Australian citizens aged 18 years and over (n=6763, 6771, 6753, 7859, 4490, 4499 cumulative)

NEWSPOLL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

A) Code of professional behaviour

NEWSPOLL adheres to the Code of Professional Behaviour of the Market Research Society of Australia. This Code includes the following key requirements:

1. Confidentiality

Clients' identities will not be revealed to respondents nor to any third party without the clients' consent or unless NEWSPOLL becomes legally obliged to do so. Respondents' identities will not be revealed to clients without respondents' consent and only in cases where the information is to be used for research purposes and the intended use has been explained to respondents.

2. Ownership of information

Results to a research study commissioned by a client become the property of the client. Results to syndicated studies remain the property of NEWSPOLL.

All research proposals, research designs, questionnaires and processing techniques, including systems of weighting, remain the property of NEWSPOLL. All computer table reports provided by NEWSPOLL identify the variables used in the weighting process. Further details, if required, are available at an additional cost. Photocopies of individual questionnaires or a copy of the database, excluding respondents' identities, may be made available to a client at the client's expense.

3. Publication of results

Clients choosing to release the findings of a NEWSPOLL survey must ensure that the results are represented in an objective and non misleading fashion.

NEWSPOLL advises that at all times questions must be objective and not intentionally misleading or attempting to elicit a desired response. NEWSPOLL must be consulted and agree in advance on the form and content of any intended release. NEWSPOLL must be provided with a copy of the proposed release and given 48 hours for its review. Up to two executive hours will be made available for this review process. Additional reviewing time, if required, will be charged at an hourly rate. NEWSPOLL is obliged to take action to correct any misleading statements about the research or its findings. The NEWSPOLL name may be used only in cases where these conditions have been satisfied.

B) Conditions of agreement between NEWSPOLL and clients

1. Reporting

Standard report format refers to two copies of an A4 sized computer table report consisting of analysis of each client question by two standard panels of discriminators. Extra analysis and optional reporting formats are available at additional cost and may require additional reporting time.

2. Confirmation of costs

Costs for a study can be confirmed only after agreement on questionnaire outline or on sighting a draft client questionnaire. Changes to agreed research specifications and/or questionnaire will result in a cost revision. Costs are quoted in current year's rates and apply for the January - December period.

3. Omnibus bookings and approvals

Space on NEWSPOLL's omnibuses is strictly limited to ensure high quality response. Early bookings, at least a week prior, are recommended and clients are advised to finalise and approve questionnaires as early as possible. In the event that a questionnaire is not approved by 11:00 am Thursday prior to fieldwork for the Adult Omnibus or by 12:00 midday Friday prior to fieldwork for the Youth Omnibus, a 15 percent late surcharge will apply (minimum of \$370+gst). Bookings may be accommodated after these deadlines but are subject to space availability and to a minimum 15 percent surcharge.

4. Cancellation charges

NEWSPOLL reserves the right to charge the full quoted study cost where a confirmed booking is made and the study is subsequently cancelled or postponed within 72 hours prior to the commencement of fieldwork. Studies cancelled in advance of 72 hours are subject to a 10 percent charge if questionnaire development has begun.

For any study cancelled or postponed after fieldwork has begun NEWSPOLL reserves the right to charge the full quoted study cost.

5. Invoicing and payment terms

NEWSPOLL's standard terms of payment are:

- omnibus studies are invoiced in full at the time of provision of results or for multi-round studies 50 percent will be invoiced at the commencement of the study and 50 percent on provision of results.
- ad hoc studies are invoiced 50 percent upon commissioning and 50 percent upon provision of results.

Invoices unpaid after 30 days will attract a late payment surcharge of up to \$1,000 per month. NEWSPOLL reserves the right to delay the commencement of any study if there are overdue invoices from previous studies. Repeated late payment of invoices will result in the need for payment in full prior to the commencement of future studies.