



AUSTRALIAN ELECTORAL COMMISSION - INDIGENOUS

Research Informing AEC 2007 Election Campaign

RESEARCH FINDINGS

WINANGALI P/L

TO HEAR TO LISTEN TO KNOW TO REMEMBER

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1 KEY FINDINGS

This research reinforces our current knowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are not engaged with or by non-Indigenous systems, institutions or policy imperatives.

This is reflected across locations, education and socio-economic demographics.

1. *Attitudes to elections/voting*

Generally, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups were not engaged by the political process at all. They felt they were marginalised and excluded by the concepts, language and the institutions.

- Although when asked, some indicated elections are not just “White man’s” business, when probed they felt that it was skewed against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The feelings about enrolling were polarised. Those who were enrolled and did vote felt that it was important “to have a say”. But those who didn’t asked “what’s the point?” They saw no benefit in the political process for them or their community at all.

2. *Attitudes towards Proof of Identity regulations*

Generally all participants felt that stricter requirements for voting were a good thing. Some expressed concern that under past rules, they could have their identity stolen at the ballot box.

However, they identified strong cultural concerns, particularly for the stolen generation. Issues such as the low likelihood that voters would possess and carry valid id, increased use of traditional names, the transitory nature of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and the residual fear of telling the Government who you are.

3. *How they vote*

This target group do not have a grasp of pre-poll and absentee voting. If they are not in their electorate (or even at the same booth they last voted) then they are likely to not vote.

- This group have had a surprising amount of fines and are primarily motivated to not incur further fines.

4. *Democracy*

This group cannot be engaged by concepts of democracy. Representative democracy is foreign because they have never seen it work for them. In fact, according to the respondents, representative democracy may have been created to oppress them.

- No one could articulate what democracy was, but could use examples of what it is not (i.e.: China, Russia and under developed nations).
- Most members of the groups did not differentiate between the AEC and the Government (they also had little understanding about Federal vs. State differences either).

The AEC needs to deliver concepts and information in a tone and style that they are familiar with to make democracy relevant to them.

5. Education

The youth group (a better educated and higher socio-economic sample) were knowledgeable about the practical aspects of voting but wanted a deeper level of knowledge about elections.

The other groups largely just want to have enough information to get them to the ballot booth, cast a valid vote and not get fined. They do not want to be engaged by the concepts just be made aware of the rules to navigate the process.

There was almost no knowledge about the differences between Federal and State electoral systems, especially the Senate.

- In Queensland (where there is no Upper House) the role of the Senator was assumed to be both provincial and national (i.e. Senators sat in the State Parliament as well as representing Qld in Canberra).
- In NSW, State and Federal politicians were interchangeable and neither represented Indigenous aspirations (although they were more hostile to John Howard than Bob Carr).

Most were aware that when one moves they must update their details but exactly how and when this should be done was vague. One respondent had moved 26 times and he was only 27 years old. Another had lived in over 10 different addresses but had not amended his address with the AEC because he always voted at the same booth.

6. Influencers

When selecting influencers to educate the community about voting and elections, the AEC must target influencers who have standing with the community, not necessarily with the Government.

- The elders, older family members (parents, etc) and key respected community members (a church leader was mentioned in one group, the local health service in another) are good choices.
- Whoever is chosen must be able to address our target with a shared language and perspective.

2 BACKGROUND

The AEC is an independent statutory authority responsible for the administration of federal elections and referenda. The AEC wishes to promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community awareness and participation in the electoral process through a comprehensive communication campaign.

While most Australians value their right to enrol and vote, even small fluctuations in the participation rate and the formality rate will be observed and publicly discussed. Therefore, the AEC must do its best to ensure that every Australian is given an equal opportunity to participate in the Federal Election.

One of the biggest challenges to face the AEC are the major changes to enrolment, including the shortening of the time prior to the close of roles, and the introduction of Proof of Identify requirements.

Therefore, given the importance of the AEC's role promoting and facilitating Australian Federal Elections, it is important to conduct strategic research before moving into creative development for the 2007 Federal Election communications campaign. A number of specific hypotheses need to be tested as well as further exploration of specific target groups identified in the strategic planning phase of this project.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation has been an issue in the past and needs to be addressed prior to the next election to ensure an increased participation rate.

Providing information to Australia's Indigenous communities presents many challenges. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are not one homogenous community. Indigenous people vary from sophisticated, educated urban dwellers, to people living in remote areas for whom English is a second or third language.

This means that the type of information provided cannot be a 'one size fits all' if it is to effectively reach the wide variety of people for whom it is intended.

Overlaying this, are issues such as the paucity of information channels in remote areas, varying literacy levels, times when the weather prevents access to certain areas, cultural differences and often a disassociation with, and lack of interest in, what is happening in Canberra, or what the 'Government' is saying.

The Australian Electoral Commission, via BMF, has commissioned WINANGALI to undertake this probe into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

WINANGALI has pleasure in submitting the findings of this research.

3 OVERVIEW OF INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

3.1 Population

The two most populous states for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are NSW and Qld. As such, we conducted our research in areas that have large numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in these states.

Significant pockets of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population exist across the designated areas, including:

NSW

- Sydney (Mt Druitt/La Perouse/Campbelltown)
- Central West (Dubbo)
- Far North West (Bourke/Walgett/etc)
- North Coast (Lismore/Grafton/Taree)

Qld

- Brisbane
- North Queensland (Townsville/Cairns/etc)
- Gulf Region/Mt Isa
- Rockhampton/Woorabinda

The urban to rural/remote population ratio is approximately 30% urban, 40% rural (i.e. regional centres and towns) and 30% remote.

Indigenous communities are very young populations, with over 80% under the age of 40 years. Less than 3% of the population have survived to reach retirement age.

A snapshot of the population:

- Average age = 20 years cf national average 34 years.
- Less likely to drink alcohol.
- 3 x more likely to be high-risk drinkers.
- 40% illiteracy rate.
- Life expectancy = 60 years cf average of 78
- 13% speak an indigenous language at home.
- Obesity rate = 2x population ave.
- 50% people smoke (cf 1 in 4).

- Incarceration = 15 x national ave.
- Earnings = 2/3 national average.

3.2 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities

Indigenous communities are very diverse - by geographical location, languages spoken, skin group, and in relation to their access to community programs and services. There is also the distinction between Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders. This diversity raises particular challenges for government agencies wishing to communicate core information and key messages.

3.3 Insights into Indigenous Research

We operate under the *AIATSIS Guidelines for Ethical Research in Indigenous Studies* which begins from the premise that: "It is essential that Indigenous peoples are participants in any research project that concerns them, to achieve an understanding for the aims and methods of the research and to share in the results of this work."

WINANGALI believes the key to communicating with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is to develop a dialogue with Indigenous communities through which respectful consultation occurs. The Indigenous researcher must work from a position of respect for the community, their traditions and cultural practices.

We also recommend that the researcher always seek local intermediaries who "know" the local community; its culture and politics where possible.

To ensure response integrity, it is important to keep formality to a minimum, use Indigenous researchers and interviewers and have an understanding of cultural issues such as "Gratuitous Concurrence" (a tendency to agree with the questioner, regardless of whether you actually agree with, or even understand the question).

3.4 Cultural difference

As mentioned above, the Indigenous populations in Australia are very diverse, and represented by a number of cultures, communities and languages.

Accordingly, Indigenous research requires careful consideration of these cultural differences and the utilisation of methodologies that are sufficiently sensitive to deliver relevant, practical and accurate outcomes.

Key levers to effective Indigenous research are sound segmentation and communication techniques. That is, segmentation of target group by location (urban, rural, remote) and access to service provision (generalist and/or Indigenous specific services) creates windows into this cultural difference, and how it may impact on audience knowledge, awareness, attitudes and behaviour. Further, using effective communication (not in terms of different languages but accommodating idioms, local phrases and terms) improves the chance of collecting good quality information.

Research with rural and remote communities is particularly challenging given that:

- 'transient' populations are common
- shyness and modesty are the 'norm'
- opinions of elders (or others with 'status') often may not be challenged.

4 OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the research is to probe Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander behaviours and attitudes and testing hypotheses and issues facing the target group.

5 METHODOLOGY

We conducted focus group interviews of **eight participants** each with the Aboriginal communities in Mt Isa in Queensland and Mount Druitt in New South Wales. We also conducted a group with the Torres Strait Islander community in Brisbane. Given the objectives of the research we also considered it important to conduct a group of young Indigenous people in Brisbane.

- Mt Druitt (urban) - **one** group
- Brisbane (Youth & Torres Strait Islander) - **two** groups
- Mount Isa (remote) - **one** group

The table below summarises the research:

	Groups (8 respondents)		Total	
	Male	Female	Grps	Respondents
Youth - Urban (18-25) Brisbane	4	4	1	8
Younger - Urban (25-35) Western Sydney	5	3	1	8
Older - Regional/Remote (40-65) Mt Isa	3	5	1	8
Torres Strait Islander (25-60) Brisbane	4	4	1	8
Total respondents	16	16	4	32

- The total number of participants = 32.
- Total Aboriginal = 24
- Total TI = 8
- Total Male = 16

- Total Female = 16

All focus groups were moderated by WINANGALI's Indigenous researchers and were conducted between the 25th May 2006 and 3rd June 2006.

5.1 Line of Inquiry

The areas under interrogation include (The full discussion guides are attached at Appendix?):

1. *Attitudes to elections/voting*

- Gauge their feelings towards the process in general.
 - "White man's" business?
- Feelings about enrolling.
 - Are their "Government" concerns
- Benefits/Disadvantages? Why enrol/why not? Why vote/why not?

2. *Attitudes towards Proof of Identity regulations*

- Gauge their feelings towards the new POI rules.
- Will this have cultural issues?
 - Stolen generation?
- Likelihood of voters having valid id?

3. *How they vote*

- Do they pre-poll vote?
- Do they vote outside their electoral area?

4. *Democracy*

- How do they feel about the idea of democracy?
 - What is it? How does it link back to the election, and the AEC?
 - Is it just to support Government (e.g.: John Howard)?
- How can the AEC make democracy relevant to them?

5. *Education*

- How knowledgeable are they about enrolling and voting - the electoral process?
- Do they know the differences between federal and state election systems?
- Their knowledge about moving and enrolment.

6. Influencers

- What role do they play in educating the community about voting/elections?
- Who should be targeted?

6 GROUP DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEYS

6.1 Urban 18-25yo Respondents

Preliminary:

- 5 enrolled; 2 not; 1 unsure
- 6 always on roll; 2 unsure
- 7 respondents completed year 12
- Most informed group
- Higher socio-economic (all in f/t employment)
- More advanced scepticism than just paranoia
- Younger better educated group (an interesting comparison with the 25-35yo)
- This group strongly identifies as Murri even though they get some of their information as a non-Indigenous Australian might.

6.2 Urban 25-35yo Respondents

Preliminary:

- 3 enrolled; 3 not; 2 unsure
- 3 always on roll; 1 off; 4 unsure
- 1 respondent had received fines
- 3 x males negligible awareness: no interest
- 2 x dominant males driven by misinformation
- Largely low education attainment & 6 unemployed
- Lower socio-economic status
- This group is the most ill-informed. As a group they are not engaged. Those who wish to seek information have not been successful.

6.3 Regional/Remote 40-65yo Respondents

Preliminary:

- 6 enrolled; 2 not
- 6 always on roll; 2 off

- 7 working fulltime and 1 had recently retired from fulltime employment.
- Dominated by one well informed male
- Rest of group largely ill-informed
- Some from Doomadgee as well as Mt Isa
- Encompassed regional and remote respondents.

6.4 Torres Strait Islander Respondents

Preliminary:

- 7 enrolled; 1 unsure
- 6 always on roll; 1 off; 1 unsure
- Over half the group had received fines
- 1 x [REDACTED] & 1 x [REDACTED]
- Most knowledge came from these two respondents
- Others partially informed but followed senior two
- This group was conducted in Brisbane because there are more Torres Strait Islanders living on the mainland and there is a strong, identifiable community in Brisbane.
- Most knowledge came from [REDACTED]'s liaison with [REDACTED]. Interestingly, this did not guarantee accuracy.

7 VOTING, ELECTIONS, ENROLLING: ATTITUDES & KNOWLEDGE

7.1 Attitudes

This discussion brought out a range of emotions with the majority being indifferent to voting and elections in general this is particularly true of the Torres Strait Islanders and the Mt Druitt group.

Common responses included:

“Doesn’t benefit me”, “Just do it to not get a fine”

There exists a strong level of scepticism towards political institutions and a frustration at not having a voice. These groups were angry at past injustices and bitter about their disenfranchisement:

“Who’s going to win?” “What will happen to the Kooris?” “The rich have their say and the poor just get heard.” “It’s a white man’s world...money talks” Mt Druitt group

“They say one thing but do another” TSI Brisbane

However, there was some positivity peppered throughout all groups. Each group identified that “voting is important” because it’s “your way to have a say”. Apart from Mt Druitt, each group also had at least one respondent who would still vote if it wasn’t compulsory.

There is also an underlying attitude that voting is ‘historically important’ because of the hardships of previous generations who worked hard to get the right to vote. However, this is not overt and is waning over time.

“When I first left school I thought it would be good to vote because I remember the struggle of Kooris to get everyone the vote and be considered a citizen of the country. But in the end it got too confusing and I haven’t voted in a couple of years. But I feel slack because that’s what they fought for” (Female 35yo, Mt Druitt)

7.2 Knowledge

In general, knowledge is low across all of the groups (with the possible exception of the Brisbane Youth group) with the basic and more practical aspects fairly well known but a poor awareness of the detail.

The types of things that are known across the groups include:

- Voting is compulsory and there are fines if you don’t,
- Where to vote (schools)

- Can absentee vote

However, there are knowledge gaps in the following:

- Specific difference between State and Federal systems
- The purpose of the two ballot papers
- How to cast absentee votes and
- What is pre-polling?

Some try to do the right thing, with minimal knowledge:

“The last time I made it (cast an absentee vote) had to go to three different electorates ... and it took me half the day to drive around and I wasn’t close enough and they didn’t have the absentee forms for that area, so I had to go to the next one. They didn’t have it, I went to the next one and they had it. It’s a bit of a pain so I reckon it’s best to avoid that absentee votes if you can” (18-25 yo, Brisbane)

“Doesn’t matter where you live or what’s on the roll, as long as you go back to the same school (booth) each time then you’re ok.” (35yo male, Mt Druitt)

However, of concern is the admission of confusion regarding how to vote and the over-reliance on word of mouth that leads to misinformation.

“My dad told me if you were Aboriginal you don’t have to vote...he told me to get off my fines I just had to go and tell them I’m a Koori. That’s why I didn’t vote” (female, Mt Druitt)

“You don’t have to update details ‘cause once you’re on, you’re on and they keep tabs on you anyway because one department tells another even though they’re not supposed to.” (Female, Mt Druitt)

“They get all the information from the Census. When you fill in the form to say how many people live in the house ... my daughter wasn’t on the roll but she is now through the Census.” (Mt Druitt 35yo Male)

“Once you’re on the roll you’re stuck there! I didn’t vote until I got married. They got me through the marriage thing (certificate) ... my missus used to vote, see?” (Mt Druitt)

Finally, there is a strong desire to know more about the voting process. But, what is interesting is that there is a distinction between the detail and motivation for this acquiring this knowledge.

The more educated the respondent, the more sophisticated the response. The youth group (and one of the Mt Isa respondents) identified the need for more detailed information to fill knowledge gaps and ensure their vote is not wasted.

On the other hand, the less educated groups (most specifically the Mt Druitt respondents) just want to be told what to do and how to do it as simply as possible to make the process a “quick and painless” as possible and to avoid receiving a fine.

7.3 Urban 18-25yo Respondents

This group was mostly well informed about the electoral process. However, there was little understanding of the differences between the Queensland and Australian structures.

As with other groups, this group gave little thought to the electoral process outside elections. However, they felt it was an important process that gave them a voice. The two who were not enrolled did not intend to enrol because they were worried if they failed to vote then they would be fined. They would not enrol if it weren't compulsory.

7.4 Urban 25-35yo Respondents

According to this group, most people don't understand the voting process and those that do see no benefit for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. However, some people like to vote to "have their say".

When an election is called the first response is negative followed by cynical responses. "What would the kooris get out of it? How would the kooris benefit?" - [REDACTED].

Voting as white man's business is reinforced by this group.

"Majority rules", [REDACTED] and "Doesn't affect kooris I know" [REDACTED].

All were aware that voting is compulsory although some myths were prevalent: "We were told that if you're aboriginal you don't have to vote." - [REDACTED] "My dad told me that. He told me that to get off my fines I just had to go and tell them I'm a koori. That's why I didn't vote. Other than that I always thought it was compulsory for anyone over 18. They would come to your door and ask if anyone was over 18 then they'd register you." - [REDACTED]

None were clear on the Federal vs. State systems and the different ballot papers. They felt it may have had something to do with the two major parties. "Isn't there one for Labor?", "You mean different coloured ones: a green one I think it was and a yellow one?", "So it's not for parties?"

7.5 Regional/Remote 40-65yo Respondents

The majority feel that voting is important because it's about having a say and influencing the way they live.

The first thoughts regarding elections and voting for this group is very cynical. The types of responses include:

"What are they going to do now?", "What promises are going to be made and not fulfilled?", and "Who's able to lie the best to do the right thing?"

Whilst this group claimed they do not view voting as "white man's business" they were sufficiently disconnected as to be cynical about the process, lack awareness

of the different ballot papers, not be able to articulate democracy, and half the group declared they would not vote if it were not compulsory.

Some members of this group also carried the myth that it wasn't compulsory for Aboriginal people to vote.

7.6 Torres Strait Islander Respondents

All group members agreed that the first thought they had about elections was to enrol on the electoral roll to avoid a fine for not voting. There was a great degree of confusion amongst all participants regarding differences between the Queensland and Australian Government structures. For example, all group members thought that Queensland senators they have voted for represented them in Australian Senate and in the Queensland Parliament.

Seven of the eight participants declared that they were indifferent to voting. [REDACTED] (male in his early 30's) said if voting was not compulsory "I wouldn't vote because all the politicians are bullshit artists. They just want to buy your vote. So what's the point in voting?" A majority of males reflected this view.

However, the most senior man present, [REDACTED], (aged over 60-plus) stated that voting was important because:

Me, I don't trust the buggers so I go and see what they are saying and to know what is going on. It [voting] is a way to make sure you know about what is going and how the Government is working for your community. It's a way of choosing our leaders.

Amongst the females in the group, there was less criticism of politicians and the electoral process. They provided general comments but no strong criticism of the electoral process. Although, they agreed "[politicians] say one thing but do another."

All participants knew it was compulsory to vote with five of the eight group members having received fines for not voting in the past.

8 RESPONSE TO PROOF OF IDENTITY

8.1 Attitudes

Benefits

Proof of Identity is an interesting issue with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups. Some respondent's assumed it was necessary currently, but only those not familiar with the electoral process.

Almost all respondents were happy with the case for POI. Some felt that the current operation could lead to issues such as identity theft or situations where others voted for them or where privacy was compromised.

When you are going up [to register on voting day to receive ballot papers] and you go there to vote the people [electoral officers] ask you for your name and address and anyone could say they are you and get your address. You can get anyone's name and address and use it.

Other benefits include legitimising the voting process (stops corruption, rigging and fraud) and it reinforces the importance of voting.

Barriers

However, all groups identified that there are cultural and structural barriers when imposed on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Some of these include:

- Many people believed few Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people would carry POI even when requested to do so when voting.
- The Mt Isa groups felt that some Aboriginal people were not registered at birth and therefore they would not have Birth Certificates. The question was asked whether these people would be allowed to vote.
- The same group also raised the issue that many people are reverting to their tribal names and their POI doesn't match. One respondent even commented:

"... I have two [first] names, my play name and my grown-up name. Sometimes when I go into vote I think which name is it now. So I look at the paper (electoral roll) and I see yes, that is my name."

- A great deal of discussion was centred on what is appropriate POI.

Stolen Generation

ALL groups felt the new POI rules would be inappropriate for members of the Stolen Generation. Generally there was sympathy for these people and a questioning about how this would make them feel.

“They don’t even know who their family are or where they come from” and “It would hurt their feelings and bring up past feelings of hurt.”

However, there was also a great deal of anger toward the Government about the treatment of the stolen generation.

“I didn’t ask to be removed. Why should I show you who I am now?”

“It was the Government that took them away from their family. The Government knows who they are, the Government stole them.”

8.2 Urban 18-25yo Respondents

The older members of the group supported proof of identify to vote as a means to protect their vote. The younger members of the group said that showing proof of identity would make it difficult for those young people who don’t have their drivers’ licence or an 18+ card.

“The advantage (of showing ID) you know that’s the person voting but the disadvantage what if you don’t have ID.” [REDACTED]

8.3 Urban 25-35yo Respondents

The members of this group were generally aware that POI was not required and very few carried POI with them as a matter of course but the general feeling was that POI should be introduced.

When asked about the cultural appropriateness, this group felt strongly that it was not appropriate, especially for elders and those from the stolen generation.

“Half of us wouldn’t have POI on us sometime.”

“... it was the government who took them away from the family. The government knows who you are the government stole ‘em.”

For a group that was strongly against the electoral process, they surprisingly engaged with the concept of POI so that “no one can vote instead of you.”

Although they did also recognise that for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, it may be “more of a hindrance ... (stopping) you from voting if you don’t have the right ID card.”

The introduction of the POI will not alter their willingness to vote (most don’t vote at the moment anyway).

8.4 Regional/Remote 40-65yo Respondents

The majority of respondents do not carry proof of identity when they vote. They are also aware that POI is not needed.

The respondents would not show POI claiming it is not culturally appropriate.

This group identified a number of issues for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in regards to POI:

- A lot of Indigenous people have no ID.
- Some Aboriginal people have never had their births registered.
- A lot of Aboriginal people now are going back to their traditional cultural names and not the names registered on birth certificates.
- Sensitivity for the stolen generation.

“They don’t really know who their family are and where they come from. It would hurt their feelings and bring up past feelings of hurt.”

- They identified there are benefits of POI provisions (stop corruption, stop fraud, stop vote rigging).

8.5 Torres Strait Islander Respondents

All members of the group agreed that proof of identify should be required to vote and were aware that it is not necessary at the moment.

Only one respondent carried proof of identity. This group claim most people did not take proof of identity with them when they went to vote.

Privacy was raised as an issue with the current proof of identity method allowing others to know personal details about them. Claiming it should be confidential.

There were questions with this group about appropriateness of ID for Torres Strait Islander people.

9 THE AEC & THE ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER COMMUNITY

9.1 Awareness & Knowledge

There is very little awareness of the Australian Electoral Commission across all groups.

Within this though, most know the AEC 'looks after' elections except Mt Druitt. In Mt Druitt only one respondent correctly identified the AEC as 'running' elections. (Of the other seven respondents: three said the Government and one each for The Candidates, Canberra and John Howard).

Most respondents are positive or ambivalent towards the AEC.

"They're the watchdog for fair play."

"(They) make sure everything's above board, votes are counted correctly, and everyone's enrolled."

However, there is some distrust and an undercurrent of suspicion about the role the AEC plays.

"You wonder who they're working for. Are they neutral? Are they working for the Government?" Female, 34, Mt Druitt

"Yeah who are they working for?" All, Mt Druitt

Many identified that the AEC has a role to help educate the community. Some suggestions included:

- Visiting the Torres Strait Islander community on Election Day to help them vote,
- Having AEC shopfronts in some communities,
- Running education sessions prior to Election Day to assist people to vote.

"They should hire a Koori to go around and explain it to us." MT Druitt

9.2 Urban 18-25yo Respondents

All members of the group had some knowledge of the Australian Electoral Commission and that it was responsible for running state and federal elections.

Interestingly, the group believed that the AEC should somehow better inform voters when they vote there will be a host of candidates from other parties on the ballot. They also believed that the AEC should give voters more warning that an election is drawing close.

This group knew there was a difference between state and federal elections but could not detail the workings of each system.

One respondent explained the “State is governed by members of parliament sitting together and making decisions and federal is they go to a senate and it’s made up of some representatives of each state.”

All participants knew that they had to re-enrol on the electoral roll if they had moved from an area in which they were enrolled to vote in.

More than half the participants did not understand the process of pre-polling.

██████ had such a difficult experience he advises it’s best to avoid absentee votes if possible.

9.3 Urban 25-35yo Respondents

This group lacked any real knowledge about the operational aspects of the electoral process and self-identified as knowing very little. Even though the group was aware the research was conducted on behalf of the AEC, only one respondent nominated the commission in response to the question of “Who runs elections?”

After further discussion, a sense of suspicion and cynicism emerged:

“You wonder who they are working for. Are they neutral? Are they working for the government?” ████████

“Sometimes they might say something positive about Johnny and not the others. They might show more positive things on TV about Liberal and not Labor.” ████████

All agreed that the AEC should tell voters things they need to know to make it easier to vote. They propose the AEC hires a koori to “go around and explain it to us.”

Myths abound with this group about enrolment and

“They get the information from the census. When you fill in the forms to say how many people live in the house that’s where they get the information. My daughter wasn’t on the roll but she is now through the census.” ████████

“(Re-enrolling) no you’re stuck there. I didn’t vote until I got married. They got me through the marriage thing (certificate) ... my missus used to vote.” ████████ (again)

“(updating information) never, once they got you, they got you, you’re there.” ████████ (again)

This group is unsure about the difference between pre-polling and absentee voting.

9.4 Regional/Remote 40-65yo Respondents

This group had one knowledgeable respondent who lead the discussion and provided answers to the other, particularly ill-informed group. They felt the general public can't understand the electoral process ("Only government workers").

Only one respondent was aware that the Australian Electoral Commission runs elections.

The group felt that the AEC should be running Education sessions, so people know how to vote properly and provide information in "simple black and white".

9.5 Torres Strait Islander Respondents

All members of the group thought that the Australian Electoral Commission ran elections for State and national elections.

However, all participants agreed that the AEC is the best body to inform people of the need to vote. The group agreed that the most effective way for the AEC to inform Torres Strait Islanders of the need to enrol and vote was through:

- Torres Strait Islander officers visiting communities
- A poster with plain English, translated to Torres Strait Islander Creole and illustrated in Torres Strait Islander colours depicting which houses of parliament an election is for and how the electoral system works
- Schoolchildren telling their parents or carers
- Radio,
- Letters from the AEC.

██████ (male, 50-plus) stated that "there was not enough information" to tell people about how to vote. ██████ (female, 30-plus) said "there was not enough information to get people [to enrol to vote] before an election.

"In the ATSIC elections you had a photo of the [of the candidates] and how you vote for. But in these ones [elections] you just have a name [on the ballot paper] and you don't know who you are voting for." ██████

10 RESPONSE TO DEMOCRACY

10.1 Meaning

Many respondents had difficulty articulating the meaning of democracy; almost none could spontaneously define the concept. There was some confusion with the Democrats.

After probing, most groups were able to paint a broad picture of what Democracy might be:

- You can choose you leader,
- Fair voting and election systems,
- All people having an equal say,

“Isn’t it power of the people?”

- Freedom of speech,

“Freedom of speech and living with your customs?”

Most often though, Democracy was most clearly defined in terms of what it isn’t: China, Russia, East Timor, North Korea and underdeveloped countries.

However, when discussing Democracy in the territories discussion, most groups asked again what it meant.

“(It’s) Just a word a big word.” [REDACTED]

10.2 Urban 18-25yo Respondents

This group believed the word democracy to be a concept used to describe Western nations and represented a ‘fair’ voting system and electing a leader to be part of that ‘fair’ process.

When asked about what they associated with a world without democracy, the respondents gave examples like South Africa and other poor nations.

The group had a clear understanding of what democracy is.

10.3 Urban 25-35yo Respondents

This group was less aware of what democracy is. Whilst freedom of speech and equal participation were offered as possible meanings, Democracy is not a word that means anything to this group. They feel disenfranchised and excluded from the public debate and feel under siege and the target of public policy amendments.

They saw free speech, public rallying and protest marching as activities demonstrating a democratic country, whilst China was an example of a non-democratic society.

This group actively disassociates itself from the representative and inclusiveness of a democracy. The general feeling was summed up by [REDACTED] "It's just a word. (A word) that's not true anyway. It's just rubbish. Just a word: a big word."

Not one respondent felt that they would vote if voting was not compulsory.

"Doesn't benefit us." "Historically it hasn't benefited Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people so why continue with it?"

"When I first left school I thought it would be good to vote because I remember the struggle of kooris to get everyone the vote and be considered a citizen of the country. But in the end it got too confusing and I haven't voted in a couple of years. But I feel slack because that's what they fought for."

To make it more relevant to them, it was suggested that the AEC hire a koori to explain the meaning of Democracy to them. [REDACTED] provided an insightful comment that the non-Indigenous political participants (and by association, the AEC) needs to "understand our point of view that relates to our circumstances."

10.4 Regional/Remote 40-65yo Respondents

This group was equally vague about the meaning of Democracy. As with the other groups, though, "having a say" was the immediate response.

This group felt that the ideals of freedom of speech and equal representation were not matched by the reality of democratic societies such as Australian and England.

China, Russia and underdeveloped countries were the kinds of images associated with a world that has no democracy

Half of group would vote if it weren't compulsory (because they want to have a say) whilst the other half felt that it doesn't matter whether they vote or not because "It still works out anyway".

As with other groups, this group wanted in formation targeted towards them and delivered in a tone and style that they are familiar with.

10.5 Torres Strait Islander Respondents

No one person could define what the word democracy meant. Nor could any of the participants describe what a world without democracy would be like. The examples of North Korea and the China were provided to give an example of non-democratic nations. After these examples, [REDACTED] stated that democracy meant "being able to choose your leaders". All respondents then agreed that being able to choose a leader was what they understood democracy to be.

There needs to be greater community awareness of what democracy is and the role of elections in the democratic process. It was alarming that no participant was able to define what democracy is until a concrete example of a non-democratic nation (in this case China and North Korea) was provided. However, this suggests that the act of voting itself is more important than understanding the concept of what democracy is and that all members of this group would vote - though mainly to avoid being fined.

11 REACTIONS TO CAMPAIGN TERRITORIES

11.1 Urban 18-25yo Respondents

First – *Do something about it*

"I kinda like that one, it's not preaching to you, if you wanna be heard say something" [REDACTED]

"There not using that authority over you." [REDACTED]

"It's a more empowering statement." [REDACTED]

Second – *Get involved*

"It sounds like something your parents would say to you." [REDACTED]

"(I liked it as much as) do something about it" ... If it's a bit doomsday it motivates you more." [REDACTED]

Third – *Your rite of passage*

"Are they going to give us the birds and bees next?" [REDACTED]

General comments included "... garbage ... not motivating ..."

All group members thought it was ridiculous.

Fourth – *The heartbeat of democracy*

"Too corny". [REDACTED]

"Too long, I stopped listening after the first couple of words." [REDACTED]

"It sounds like a lie." [REDACTED]

Fifth – *It's compulsory to vote*

"I've been scared off already. I'm harder to find if my names not on there."
[REDACTED]

"I don't want to get fined, leave me alone." [REDACTED]

The group did not like this one and found it threatening.

11.2 Urban 25-35yo Respondents

First - *The power to be heard*

"Yes. To be heard you've got to vote." [REDACTED]

"If you seize your opportunity. That's more about it's my choice." [REDACTED]

"Yes it sounds like I'd get a say in it." [REDACTED]

The group thought that this was the best slogan because if you want to participate then you can.

Second - It's compulsory to vote

"A bit demanding." [REDACTED]

"But it's true. Heavy handed but it's true. This would work because of the scare tactics but the other one was better." [REDACTED]

This was voted number two by all participants because it was true and honest.

Third - It's your responsibility

"No I live in the country (Australia) and I don't get nothing." [REDACTED]

All - no

This was considered unsuitable and on probing was ranked as number three.

Fourth - The heartbeat of democracy

All - no

"That's not true anyway. It's just rubbish. Just a word a big word." [REDACTED]

All - agree with [REDACTED].

The whole group agreed that this was unsuitable because they viewed it as dishonest.

Fifth - The patriotic thing to do

"What's patriotic?" [REDACTED]

"What would you love about this country?" [REDACTED]

"I can't even walk in the shopping centre without someone wanting to strip me down (and search me)." [REDACTED]

This was voted as the least popular slogan.

11.3 Regional/Remote 40-65yo Respondents

First - It's compulsory to vote

Clear

Understandable

Fine! Open eyes and ears

Plain and simple

Second - *The power to be heard*

A lie for a start

They will do what they want to do!

Third - *It's your responsibility*

Sounds like politicians want everyone to vote

Straight forward

Fourth - *The heartbeat of democracy*

Need to simplify wording

Not clear

Need to rephrase

Say what is democracy

Simplify word democracy

One person, one vote

Fifth - *The patriotic thing to do*

What does patriotic mean?

Needs to be simple language

Loyalty to country and duty to vote

Have a say in how your country's run

Take pride in the way your country's run.

Suggested alternative

Take pride in the way your country's run

Voting in the Federal election is the right thing for all Australians to do. It shows that you are interested in your country.

11.4 Torres Strait Islander Respondents

First - *The power to be heard*

"This is good, but unless you are politically minded you won't understand the words. It explains more than the first one". [REDACTED]

"This our people sabe (understand) and they (Torres Strait Islander people) have got to know the truth. These guys (politicians) are not our bosses. They listen to us." [REDACTED]

Second - It's compulsory to vote

The threat of being fined for not voting encouraged all members of the group to vote. The group thought that this was okay because it explained that everyone had to vote or they would be fined.

"It's a bad message but that's why everyone votes anyway". [REDACTED]

"You are (the AEC) speaking the truth. No good gammin (lying) because this is the truth." [REDACTED]

Third - It's your responsibility

"It's our responsibility to vote and get involved." [REDACTED]

"It let's you know that you have responsibility and you should take it. It says that you are in a team and you shouldn't let your country down." [REDACTED]

"Well, the government has let us down, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. They've taken everything away." [REDACTED]

Fourth - The heartbeat of democracy

"Most people don't know what democracy is. It sounds good for the first part of the sentence but people wouldn't know what democracy is. Everyday person in the street doesn't know, unless you are politically minded then you would know." [REDACTED]

The whole group agreed with this.

Fifth - The patriotic thing to do

"You see that you just think America." [REDACTED]

"No it's rubbish. Put him last on the list." [REDACTED]

"You see George Bush when you hear that." [REDACTED]

This was voted as the least popular slogan because of its jingoistic language and connotations.

APPENDIX A – BRISBANE (18-25YO URBAN) RESPONDENTS

Brisbane youth Demographic Survey

1. How old are you?

- 18-24 years 6
- 25-29 years 2

2. Are you

- Male 4
- Female 4

3. Which of the following best describes your work status?

- Working full-time 8
- Student – Part time (1 - also worked f/t)

4a. Do you speak one or more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages at home?

- Yes – How many
- No 8

4b. How comfortable are you with reading English? (Tick one)

- Can read well 8

5. Are you currently listed on an electoral roll?

- Yes 5
- No 2
- Not sure 1

6. Have you **always** been listed on the electoral roll?

- Yes - I have always been listed on the electoral roll 6
- No - I have been off the electoral roll for a period of time
- Not sure 2

Brisbane youth Research Responses

Introduction

The group comprised four females and four males. The combined group ranged in age from 18 to 25. The members of the group are urban Aboriginal people and all resided in Brisbane and surrounds for more than a decade. Seven of the respondents had completed high school to year 12, one had completed Year 10.

Two of the eight had not enrolled to vote or voted in an election. The group in general was quite sceptical of the electoral process and although recognized the importance of voting

found it difficult to believe their vote really counted. There was a strong sense that it was important for young Aboriginal people to vote because of all the hardships of the previous generations and the fact that Indigenous people were only able to vote a few decades ago.

Voting, Elections & Democracy

All group members agreed that the first thought they had about elections was to enrol on the electoral roll to avoid a fine for not voting. There was little understanding of the differences between the Queensland and Australian structures.

One of the younger females who had not enrolled or voted made an interesting comment after being shown a ballot paper for the first time.

██████ believed the larger paper where you list numbers in all the boxes looked like a lot of work and “believed people who were serious about voting and the system would fill this section in.” “The other paper which required only 1 number looked much easier.”

All participants knew that it was compulsory to vote. They have heard this message through the media, TV, family and friends.

The two who were not enrolled did not intend to enrol because they were worried if they failed to vote then they would be fined. They also said if voting was not compulsory they would not enrol.

The four men and two women who were enrolled to vote said they would still enrol to vote because they believed it was an important process that gave them a voice.

All members of the group said they knew that they could enrol to vote at their local post office.

DEMOCRACY

The group believed the word democracy to be a concept used to describe Western nations and represented a “fair” voting system and electing a leader to be part of that ‘fair’ process.

When asked about what they associated with a world without democracy, the respondents gave examples like South Africa and other poor nations.

The group had a clear understanding of what democracy is.

AEC & democracy

All members of the group had some knowledge of the Australian Electoral Commission and that it was responsible for running state and federal elections.

All of the participants indicated that they did not know enough about other political parties outside of Labor and Liberal. They said that lack of knowledge about the other parties confused them when they voted and they only recognized two main parties.

Interestingly, the group believed that the AEC should somehow better inform voters when they vote there will be a host of candidates from other parties on the ballot. They also believed that the AEC should give voters more warning that an election is drawing close.

Knowledge about voting/enrolling/pre-poll voting

The participants knew there was a difference between state and federal elections. Most could not detail the workings of each system.

████████ explained that the “State is governed by members of parliament sitting together and making decisions and federal is they go to a senate and it’s made up of some representatives of each state.”

All participants only thought about voting at election time

All participants stated that they knew to vote, and did so, at their local school.

All participants knew that they had to re-enrol on the electoral roll if they had moved from an area in which they were enrolled to vote in.

████ said “You get a thing in the mail saying you’re a member of Bonner or whatever else and I get really confused by it, you gotta sort of know your local area, and it can get pretty difficult.”

All participants knew that they were able to re-enrol at their local post office.

More than half the participants did not understand the process of pre-polling.

████ said “When you vote you’re voting for your local people so if you’re making an absent vote somewhere else do you get the opportunity to vote for your local people if you even know who they are?”

████ “The last time I made it (cast an absentee vote) had to go to three different electorates, it’s like the zones and it took me half the day to drive around and I wasn’t close enough and they didn’t have the absentee forms for that area, so I had to go to the next one. They didn’t have it, I went to the next one and they had it. It’s a bit of a pain so I reckon it’s best to avoid that absentee votes if you can.”

Proof of identity

The older members of the group supported proof of identify to vote as a means to protect their vote. The younger members of the group said that showing proof of identity would make it difficult for those young people who don’t have their drivers’ licence or an 18+ card.

████ said “you do because you could get party members who know that maybe someone’s away, died or turning up and voting on behalf of that person if you don’t have to show identification. So it really protects your vote.”

All participants said that you did not have to show proof of Identity when you vote, you just said your name and it was crossed off the electoral roll.

████ said “The advantage (of showing ID) you know that’s the person voting but the disadvantage what if you don’t have ID.”

One of the youngest girls “I think it just makes it more difficult. Making it compulsory to vote they’re getting people up, out of whatever they’re doing and if they have ID to do it as well it’s just another thing.”

Barriers & influencers

The entire group agreed there was enough information informing them about enrolling, but the voting process was more confusing and they needed more information.

■■■■ said “they used to send me those forms every year but I just leave it there or forget about it every time.”

■■■■ stated “if people don’t understand it then they probably don’t feel like it relates to them and it’s just not as important to them.”

All of the respondents didn’t feel there was enough information about the voting process.

■■■■ “Obviously not every (one here) is uneducated, but we don’t know that much. The most you know is when you get to the booth see all the names there, the party name and that’s all you got to go by.”

The youngest female ■■■■ said an incident involving her mother played a large role in why she doesn’t vote “Every time my mum went to the school to vote her name wouldn’t be on any of the lists, so she’d just be standing around for like 3 hours, wondering what to do and then she didn’t even end up having to vote because her name wasn’t on the list.”

Moving Process

One participant has moved recently and said he got the forms from the post office two weeks ago and hasn’t filled it in.

He added that: “There’s ads on at the moment saying it’s only going to take five minutes and it could be the most important thing you do in the day. So you can ring up and you don’t have to get the forms so I might do that.”

Another participant questioned whether if you moved somewhere in the near vicinity of where you did live would you still need to update your enrolment information if it was the same local member.

The group wasn’t sure about the answer with one member replying that “you would just have to check the boundaries.”

Ranking of things to do when moving

All participants ranked the order of importance for changing personal details. These are:

- Electricity
- Phone
- Gas
- Driver’s licence
- Video shop membership
- Electoral roll details

Message delivery and role of others

The group agreed that more information needed to be given in a more accessible way and from young Aboriginal people they can relate to.

█████ said “It should be on your bills, 'cause you look at them all the time.”

█████ said “she preferred email, because you always read through that stuff.”

The group agreed that both systems of receiving information would get their attention more.

9. Testing motivators for voting (10min)

<p>Motivator</p>	<p>General response from the group to this motivator (include any issues identified and quotes, where possible)</p>
<p><i>The heartbeat of democracy</i></p>	<p>█████: “Too corny”.</p> <p>█████: “Too long, I stopped listening after the first couple of words.”</p> <p>█████: “It sounds like a lie.”</p> <p><i>This was rated fourth.</i></p>
<p><i>Get Involved</i></p>	<p>█████ said it “sounds like something your parents would say to you.”</p> <p>█████ liked it as much as “do something about it” ... If it’s a bit doomsday it motivates you more.”</p> <p><i>This was rated second.</i></p>
<p><i>It’s compulsory to vote</i></p>	<p>█████ said: “I’ve been scared off already. I’m harder to find if my names not on there.”</p> <p>█████ said: “I don’t want to get fined, leave me alone.”</p> <p>The group did not like this one and found it threatening.</p> <p><i>This was rated last.</i></p>
<p><i>Your rite of passage</i></p>	<p>█████: “Are they going to give us the birds and bees next?”</p> <p>General comments included “... garbage ... not motivating ...”</p> <p>All group members thought it was ridiculous.</p> <p><i>This was rated third.</i></p>
<p><i>Do something about it</i></p>	<p>█████: “ I kinda like that one, it’s not preaching to you, if you wanna be heard say something ”</p> <p>█████: “There not using that authority over you.”</p> <p>█████: “It’s a more empowering statement.”</p> <p><i>This was rated first.</i></p>

The ranking was:

First – *Do something about it*

Second – *Get involved*

Third – *Your rite of passage*

Fourth - *The heartbeat of democracy*

Fifth - *It's compulsory to vote*

APPENDIX B – MT DRUITT (25-35YO URBAN) RESPONDENTS

Mt Drutt Demographic Survey

3. How old are you?

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 25-29 years | 4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 30-34 years | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 35-39 years | 3 |

4. Are you

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Male | 5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Female | 3 |

3. Which of the following best describes your work status?

- | | |
|--|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Working full-time | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Working part-time | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Home duties | 4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unemployed | 2 |

4a. Do you speak one or more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages at home?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes – How many 1 (1) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No | 7 |

4b. How comfortable are you with reading English? (Tick one)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Can read a bit | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Can read well | 7 |

5. Are you currently listed on an electoral roll?

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | 3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No | 3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure | 2 |

6. Have you **always** been listed on the electoral roll?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes - I have always been listed <u>on</u> the electoral roll | 3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No - I have been <u>off</u> the electoral roll for a period of time | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure | 4 |

Mt Drutt Research Responses

1. Introduction (5min)

34 votes regularly. Lives with partner no kids.

27 doesn't vote at all (partner with child)

33 didn't vote last time and got fined (partner with child)

28 votes but doesn't care or participate.
 35 votes and is fairly well informed. Has partner and children.
 25 doesn't vote and is borderline illiterate.
 35 votes because he has to or else he will get fined. Thinks Census form and Marriage Certificate are de-facto enrolment forms. Married with kids.
 25 has never voted and neither has his friends. Is only vaguely aware when there is an election on. Lives with parents occasionally.

2. Voting, Elections & Democracy (25min)

- **How do you feel about the process of voting?**
 - **How important is voting to you? Why do you say that?**
 - Most people don't understand it. They took away ATSIC?
 - Can't see how its benefits us in anyway? If we're going to vote how is it going to benefit us in anyway what's the point
 - Some people like to vote just have their say. It's good to vote and if who you vote for gets in you feel like you've contributed but if they don't then nothing comes of it then it was a waste of tome
- Don't see the point kooris get nothing out of it.
- **When you hear there's an election coming up, what are the first things you think about? PROBE - And then what do you think about – what other thoughts, associations or feelings come to mind?**

Arseholes, who's going to win, what will happen to the kooris, the rich have the say and the poor just get heard, it's a white man's world, don't worry about it, money talks,

"I just think what would the kooris get out of it. How would the kooris benefit?" –
 - **Some people in the community think about voting as "white man's business". What do you think and why?**

Yes it's true. –
 It's pretty much how we think. –
 Majority rules –
 Doesn't affect kooris I know –
 If you don't know what you're doing when you go vote why do it? –
 - **Is voting compulsory? IF YES - Who for – what types of people?**

Yes if you're on the roll, if you're registered. "We were told that if you're aboriginal you don't have to vote." – "My dad told me that. He told me that to get off my fines I just had to go and tell them I'm a koori. That's why I didn't vote. Other than that I always thought it was compulsory for anyone over 18. They would come to your door and ask if anyone was over 18 then they'd register you." –
 - **Why do we have two ballot papers?**

No, don't know nothing about anything when it comes to voting. Two what? Isn't there one for Labor? You mean different coloured ones: a green one I think it was and a yellow one? So it's not for parties?
 - **EXPLORE HOW PARTICIPANTS IN THE GROUP CURRENTLY USE THE 2 DIFFERENT BALLOT PAPERS. USE REAL BALLOT PAPERS AS STIMULUS WHEN SEEKING THEIR RESPONSES**
 - That's the Federal Government is it? And that's the local Government?
 - So we got to tick all those boxes.

- Is one Federal and one local?
- what's the difference between Federal and ...?

No one has any idea about why there are two? No!

Do you know who you vote for in a Federal election? No idea. Labor. All realise not John Howard.

No idea the difference or what you do. No idea of the difference. A choice of ticking all in order.

- **What does the word democracy mean to you? PROBE -**

- Everyone gets a say.
- Free country free speech.
- The word democrats comes to mind. Don't ask me what it means it just comes to mind.

- **How important is a democracy to you? Why do you say that?**

- We don't understand it.
- I don't know what it means.
- If I know what it means then I might think about it.
- I don't even know what it means.

What does it mean to you?

- Isn't it the power of the people?
- Don't know what it means.
- It's just a word that comes up around election times.

Not at all! Not a word that means anything to this group.

- **What comes to mind when you hear this word? PROBE - Do you associate this word with elections?**

Elections. Voting. Referendums. Rallies.

- **What kinds of images do you associate with a democracy?**

- a rally
- Someone speaking for the people. At one of these rallies and marching and that.
- election campaigns ads on TV
- reporter
- Member of Parliament, debates

- **What kind of world has a democracy? MODERATOR TO LIST KEY IMAGES THE GROUP COMES UP WITH ON ONE SIDE OF A FLIPCHART**

Western World. Civilised world. Don't know. China's not a democracy. What is a democracy? China is communist.

– China has it. They had them bulldozers ... no er Tanks in China. So it's there. Democracy is everywhere.

- **What kinds of images do you associate with a world that has no democracy? USE OTHER HALF OF FLIPCHART TO LIST THESE KEY IMAGES WITH GROUP**

– China. A man standing in front of tanks. Careful of what you say – who you vote for. I remember watching this show on TV. It's when Indonesia invaded Timor and they were having an election there and there was all these Indonesian walking up the line saying you better vote for so and so and taking them out and shooting them if they didn't vote for Indonesia.

- **If voting wasn't compulsory, would you still do it? PROBE –**

No universally. No one would do it. No guarantees. Doesn't benefit us. Historically it hasn't benefited

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people so why continue with it?

██████ – When I first left school I thought it would be good to vote because I remember the struggle of kooris to get everyone the vote and be considered a citizen of the country. But in the end it got too confusing and I haven't voted in a couple of years. But I feel slack because that's what they fought for.

- Some people say that a true democracy is when everyone has a say so that's why it's important to vote - would you agree or not? Why?

Yes all agree.

██████ – yes everyone is heard.

██████ – everyone gets a say.

Does it happen today?

No.

██████ – that's the point of it isn't it? You can't have your say if you don't vote.

3. AEC & democracy (5min)

- Who runs elections?

The Government (3 respondents), the AEC (1 respondent), the candidates (1 respondents), Canberra (1 respondents), Johnny Howard (1 respondents).

██████ – who determines when it's gonna be election time? Is it the same time every time, every two or three years?

██████ – Every year you vote isn't it?

██████ – But because we are a democracy, if we don't like what Johnny is doing, isn't it up to the people to call an election?

██████ – No it's up to the opposition.

██████ – No you call a petition and get rid of him.

- What do you think the role of this body/organisation is?

What is there to think?

██████ – You wonder who they are working for. Are they neutral? Are they working for the government?

All – that's a good one. Yeah! Who are they working for?

██████ – sometimes they might say something positive about Johnny and not the others. They might show more positive things on TV about Liberal and not Labor.

Who are they? Middle men?

- How should the body/organisation that looks after elections speak to you about them? What kinds of things should they be telling you?

Advertisements. Campaigns. Better ways to vote. Make it easier to vote. Things you need to know to vote.

- How can this body make a democracy relevant to you and/or other people in your community?

Hire a koori to go around and explain it to us.

██████ – Understand our point of view that relates to our circumstances.

██████ – Better if it was another koori rather than a new Australian or Chinese or something.

4. Knowledge about voting/enrolling/pre-poll voting (15min)

- Some people know a lot about Australia's electoral system while other people don't know very much. Where do you think you fit?

All claimed to know nothing.

█ – I like to think I know something.

- Does anyone know the difference between state and federal election systems? IF YES – what is the difference?

█ – One's the whole country and the other is just the state.

- In terms of voting, when do you think about voting? Is it only at election time or not?

Election time. Yeah (some)

█ – I don't even think of it then.

Yeah (some)

- Do you need information on where to go and how to vote on Election Day or not? IF YES - where would you find that information?

Know where to go but don't know what to do.

Just follow the crowd.

Signs are up all over the place. It's always at the school. There's people and signs up outside the school.

█ – in the weeks leading up to it they let you know. You get a letter to the householder and ads in the paper.

█ – I get the letter and follow that.

█ – when you vote you have to go to that same spot every time. If you don't then you have to vote absentee.

- In terms of enrolling, when do you think about your enrolment details (IF NECESSARY SAY: "your name and address kept on the electoral roll")? Is it only at election time or not?

What details?

When you just arrive at the gate. When you go to the school and ask.

- Do you ever get worried about your enrolment details being on file with the "government"?

█ – No. They get the information from the census. When you fill in the forms to say how many people live in the house that's where they get the information. My daughter wasn't on the roll but she is now through the census.

█ – Yes. The government gets the information.

█ – anyone can access the electoral roll in the library.

█ – any Government department can.

█ – if we were a communist country I would but no.

█ – no, I agree

- What does "re-enrolling" mean?

█ – you were probably enrolled or didn't vote now you've got to enrol again.

█ – didn't vote and you got to start all over again.

█ – start over again

█ – Change your address

█ – so they don't take you off the roll at all

█ – no you're stuck there. I didn't vote until I got married. They got me through the marriage thing (certificate) ... my missus used to vote.

How would you go about it?

█ – ring up

Can't you do it on the day? The ATO?

- **When do you have to update your enrolment details – under what circumstances?**

When they change.

- never, once they got you, they got you, you're there.
- but when you're address changes you have to update that.

How?

They send you a letter to see if you still live there. If you've got a new address you tell them.

- **What do you do if you're going to be away on Election Day? PROBE –**

You vote where you are.

- no you vote absentee.
- you can ring up and let them know you won't be there

- **Do you pre-poll or not?**

- yeah you can.
- no you can't do that.

Discussion about whether or not you can.

- I reckon you can. You just ring up and let them know.

- **Are you aware of what to do and where to go to organise a pre-poll vote?**

Discussion about whether or not you can. One thinks it can't be done. Most not sure. [REDACTED] thinks you can.

- I reckon you can. You just ring up and let them know.

- **What do you do if you're out of you electoral area on the day?**

- come home to a big fine.

5. Proof of identity (POI) (5min)

- **Do you think you need POI when enrolling and voting?**

No. just comes down to your age.

- don't you have to show who you are?
- no your name is on the form. Soon as you turn 18 they send you a form.

- **What do you normally do when you go and vote - do you have POI on you or not?**

No.

I have the Medicare card.

Wallet – normally carry my wallet with me.

Yes – most but not specifically to vote.

- **How do you feel about providing POI when you go and vote?**

Good so no one votes for you. So they know who you are. They should be asking people for id. Showing id would be good.

- **Is this culturally appropriate?**

No. if they're not going to ask everybody

- ½ of us wouldn't have poi on us sometime. What if you don't have a proof of age card, concession card, or Medicare card?

Qn: [REDACTED] **do your mates carry wallets with them?**

No they only carry wallets when they have money in it.

- Will it be a bit sensitive for people in the community a part of the stolen generation?

No I don't reckon they would.

– I think they would. "I didn't ask to be removed why should I show you who I am?"
 – I reckon they would ... it was the government who took them away from the family. The government knows who you are the government stole 'em.

- Could there be issues with people in the community having valid ID on them or not?

As long as they accept pension card or even a Medicare card.

– If you're on the dole you'd have valid id.
 – you'd have it anyway 'cos you can't even catch a bus without it.

- What kind of ID do you think should be appropriate?

Pension card, concession card, health care, Medicare, if you haven't got photo id, birth certificate,

- What are the benefits/disadvantages of showing POI when voting?

No one can vote instead of you.

– It's more of a hindrance I reckon. Stops you from voting if you don't have the right ID card.

Most agree. What if they had an electoral card?

- Does showing POI change your attitude towards voting at all, or does it make no difference?
 PROBE – Some people might say it makes them feel like the government is watching/controlling them.

Depends on what sort of id they want. Unsure. No. Still won't vote. No difference. It's all I the news now about your id and that. People can get your information from the street. There's no such thing as privacy anymore.

6. Barriers & influencers (5min)

- Are there any factors that make it hard to understand how enrolling, voting or the electoral system works? Or that may prevent your ability to vote? What about within your wider community?

We don't understand it in the first place. What's it all about? It's when you get down there past all those different people and it confuses you. A big gimmick. We don't get nothing. Just a f@@king show.

- What role do others in the community play in educating people about voting and elections?
 PROBE – Elders? Any members of the community involved in the political process? LOOK FOR ANY EXAMPLES

– Putting pamphlets out.
 – we just ask our parents what you do.
 – I don't even ask what's going on.

Anyone else?

– Computer, internet. Do your homework.
 – the older generation.

Involved

– they sack them all. Blackfellas they're all sacking them all. Charlie Perkins he was alright.

- Which people do you think are important to use as educators in keeping the people in your community well informed about how enrolment and voting works?

██████ – The man Mundine.

All – yeah

██████ – I reckon the elders ‘cause we always talk about it anyway. We all sit down and have a yarn while we’re having a fag.

What about the kids?

School newsletter.

7. Moving Process (10min)

- **Imagine that you had to move house. What would be on your list of things to do? LOOK FOR MENTION OF UPDATING ENROLMENT DETAILS**

Clean the fridge, redirect the mail, fix broken doors and holes in the walls and burns in the carpet.

██████ – You do the priorities first that won’t get you into debt. Then you fix up the debt from where you moved from.

██████ – it carries on with you. The debt.

Moved in the past 5 or so years?

ALL – YES!

██████ – I’ve had 26 addresses.

Anyone change enrolment details?

ALL – NO!!

- **What would be your priorities in terms of updating your address details? GET PARTICIPANTS TO RANK –**
 - Bills – electricity, water, phone, etc.
 - Leisure – RSLs, video stores, etc.
 - Drivers licence

██████ – You do the priorities first that won’t get you into debt. Then you fix up the debt from where you moved from.

- **Where would updating your enrolment details fit into this ranking?**

Doesn’t appear on the list at all. Even when prompted.

- **Do you know whether you have to update your enrolment details or not?**

All knew they should/needed to.

- **EXPLAIN THAT IT’S BEST THAT YOU DO UPDATE YOUR DETAILS – When would you do this? (i.e. when you move or when an election’s on?)**

When the election’s on.

██████ – yeah just before the election.

– You can vote anywhere as long as you keep that same address.

– as long as you keep going back to that same school.

- **What would remind you that you need to update your details?**

██████ – The ads on TV.

– a hit on the forehead.

Just ads.

- What kind of places would you like to see a message reminding you that if you've moved, you need to update your details?
 [redacted] – Centrelink change of circumstances.
 [redacted] – shopping centre.

8. Message delivery and role of others (10min)

- Are there any other places we haven't talked about that you currently go to for information on enrolling; voting or that can answer questions you have about an election? EXPLORE
 [redacted] – no we want a place so we can go there and find out that information.

Discussion about whether the church filled that role and if it still does.

[redacted] – use the church on Luxford Road.

- What sources of information about enrolling or voting would you consider most trustworthy?
 All – Darug Medical Centre. You get all ages there. People go there. They know everyone.
 [redacted] – Can't speak for people in Redfern or anyone else but out here we all go to Darug.

- Where would you prefer to receive information about enrolling, voting and the election generally – through which sources? PROBE
 [redacted] – Aboriginal service. Come out and speak to aboriginal people about it. Come and explain to us all what's going on. Face to face.

Posters, runners in an organisation,

- Verbal? Written? Or both?
- Who from?

All – Verbal

- What role do other members of your family play in keeping you informed about enrolment or voting during elections?
 Parents and elders play an important role. Talking when over a tea or a smoke.

9. Testing motivators for voting (10min)

Motivator	General response from the group to this motivator (include any issues identified and quotes, where possible)
<i>The heartbeat of democracy</i>	All – no [redacted] – that's not true anyway. It's just rubbish. Just a word a big word. All – agree with [redacted]. The whole group agreed that this was unsuitable because they viewed it as dishonest.
<i>The power to be heard</i>	[redacted] – yes. To be heard you've got to vote. [redacted] – if you seize your opportunity. That's more about it's my choice. [redacted] – yes it sounds like I'd get a say in it.

	The group thought that this was the best slogan because if you want to participate then you can.
<i>It's compulsory to vote</i>	<p>██████ – a bit demanding. ██████ – but it's true. Heavy handed but its true. This would work because of the scare tactics but the other one was better.</p> <p>This was voted number two by all participants because it was true and honest.</p>
<i>It's your responsibility</i>	<p>██████ – no I live in the country and I don't get nothing. All - no</p> <p>This was considered unsuitable and on probing was ranked as number three.</p>
<i>The patriotic thing to do</i>	<p>██████ – what's patriotic? ██████ – what would you love about this country? ██████ – I can't even walk in the shopping centre without someone wanting to strip me down.</p> <p>This was voted as the least popular slogan.</p>

The ranking was:

- First - *The power to be heard*
- Second - *It's compulsory to vote*
- Third - *It's your responsibility*
- Fourth - *The heartbeat of democracy*
- Fifth - *The patriotic thing to do*

The final three were all considered unsuitable (“they’re just rubbish. Just a word and it don’t mean nothing” – ██████) but “Patriotic” was considered the most-worst and “Responsibility” was considered least-worst and they were ranked accordingly.

APPENDIX C – MT ISA RESPONDENTS

Mt Isa Demographic Survey

5. How old are you?

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 35-39 years | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 40-44 years | 3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 45-54 years | 2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 55-64 years | 2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 65+ years | 1 |

6. Are you

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Male | 3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Female | 5 |

3. Which of the following best describes your work status?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Working full-time | 7 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Retired | 1 |

4a. Do you speak one or more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages at home?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes – How many (1) | 2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No | 6 |

4b. How comfortable are you with reading English? (Tick one)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Can read well | 8 |
|--|---|

5. Are you currently listed on an electoral roll?

- | | |
|------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | 6 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No | 2 |

6. Have you **always** been listed on the electoral roll?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes - I have always been listed <u>on</u> the electoral roll | 6 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No - I have been <u>off</u> the electoral roll for a period of time | 2 |

Mt Isa Research Responses

1. Introduction (5min)

Female 41 years (never voted) Defacto relationship
Female 64 years (voted last election) Married

Female 41 years (Voted last election) Married
 Female 38 years (Voted last election) Single Parent
 Female 55 years (Voted last election) (Married)
 Male 46 years (Voted last election) (Married)
 Male 43 years (never voted) Defacto relationship
 Male 46 years (voted last election) Single

2. Voting, Elections & Democracy (25min)

- How do you feel about the process of voting?
Pretty fair, Have your say, Should be people's choice
 - How important is voting to you? Why do you say that?
 - **Its about having your say (6 out of group)**
 - **Wasn't important (2 out of group)**
 - **Equal say. Everyone has the right to make equal decisions to influence the way we live.**
 - **Communism comes under the same way.**
 - When you hear there's an election coming up, what are the first things you think about? PROBE - And *then* what do you think about – what other thoughts, associations or feelings come to mind?
 - **What are they going to do now?**
 - **What promises are going to be made and not fulfilled?**
 - **Who's able to lie the best to do the right thing**
 - Some people in the community think about voting as "white man's business". What do you think and why?
 - **Disagree with statement**
 - **Black man have to have say**
 - **White man's ways in the fact that never any Indigenous people standing in the election.**
 - Is voting compulsory? IF YES - Who for – what types of people?
 - **Yes they say it. You get a fine if you don't vote.**
 - **Some people thought in the past it wasn't compulsory for Aboriginal people to vote, but have just found out recently that is not correct.**
 - Why do we have two ballot papers?
 - EXPLORE HOW PARTICIPANTS IN THE GROUP CURRENTLY USE THE 2 DIFFERENT BALLOT PAPERS. USE REAL BALLOT PAPERS AS STIMULUS WHEN SEEKING THEIR RESPONSES
 - **Two ballot papers are used for Senate and the House of Reps. (only one person in the group knew this).**
 - **Confusing with State and Local Government elections.**
 - What does the word democracy mean to you? PROBE –
 - **People having a say**
 - **Don't even think about it, just go and vote.**
 - **Different political parties, democrats, individuals.**
 - How important is a democracy to you? Why do you say that?
 - What comes to mind when you hear this word? PROBE - Do you associate this word with elections?
 - **Yes**

- **Democracy can be interpreted in a lot of different ways. Needs to be a clearer meaning**

- What kinds of images do you associate with a democracy? What kind of world has a democracy? MODERATOR TO LIST KEY IMAGES THE GROUP COMES UP WITH ON ONE SIDE OF A FLIPCHART
 - **Democracy – Equal say.**
 - **Everyone has the right to make equal decisions to influence the way we live.**
 - **Communism comes under the same way.**
 - **Politics people handling money get richer. (The politicians). Shouldn't be that way.**
 - **Catch 22**
 - **Word open for interpretation.**
 - **Australia and England seem as having a democracy, supposedly freedom of speech and live with their customs.**
 - **They say East Timor has a democracy but look where it is going.**
 - **Australia's not run by the democrats.**
- What kinds of images do you associate with a world that has no democracy? USE OTHER HALF OF FLIPCHART TO LIST THESE KEY IMAGES WITH GROUP
 - **Underdeveloped countries**
 - **Poverty**
 - **China and Russia are non democratic places**
- If voting wasn't compulsory, would you still do it? PROBE -
 - Some people say that a true democracy is when everyone has a say so that's why it's important to vote - would you agree or not? Why?
 - **(Half of group said yes – because they wanted to have a say)**
 - **(Half of group said no – It still works out anyway)**

3. AEC & democracy (5min)

- Who runs elections?
 - **Australian Electoral Commission runs elections**
 - **To have elections, must be okayed by Governor General and it's ironic that he is still ruled by the Queen, so we are basically ruled by England.**
- What do you think the role of this body/organisation is?
 - **Ensure everyone's enrolled**
 - **Votes counted correctly**
 - **Everything above board**
 - **Watch dog for fair play**
- How should the body/organisation that looks after elections speak to you about them? What kinds of things should they be telling you?
 - **Should be running Education sessions, so people know how to vote properly.**
 - **Advertisements are too fast- not clear enough**
- How can this body make a democracy relevant to you and/or other people in your community?
 - **Put information in simple black and white information.**
 - **Normal public can't understand**

-Only government workers**4. Knowledge about voting/enrolling/pre-poll voting (15min)**

- Some people know a lot about Australia's electoral system while other people don't know very much. Where do you think you fit?
 - **Half way**
 - **Don't understand**
 - **Understand a little bit**
 - **Enough. Ask partner**
 - **Voted same party all life**
 - **90% of people wouldn't understand vote system and the overall process.**
- Does anyone know the difference between state and federal election systems? IF YES – what is the difference?
 - **Federal (To vote in Prime Minister) Howard**
 - **State (To vote in Premier) Beattie**
 - **Federal House of Reps & Senate(one person's comments)**
 - **State – Vote for two parties, most candidates win government (One person's comment)**
- In terms of voting, when do you think about voting? Is it only at election time or not?
 - **Yes only at election time. All you see in paper and advertising on radio and television.**
- Do you need information on where to go and how to vote on Election Day or not? IF YES - where would you find that information?
 - **Yes you do need it and you will find it at the schools when you go to vote.**
 -
- In terms of enrolling, when do you think about your enrolment details (IF NECESSARY SAY: "your name and address kept on the electoral roll")? Is it only at election time or not?
 - **Yes always worried about your personal details and think when you don't vote that they can match it up to your Tax return.**
 - **6 out of the group weren't worried**
- Do you ever get worried about your enrolment details being on file with the "government"?
 - **No (3 people)**
 - **Yes (2 people)**
 - **Some (3 people)**
- What does "re-enrolling" mean? How would you go about it?
 - **Keep you up to date to check your details**
 - **Update details when you move**
 - **They send out a letter**
- When do you have to update your enrolment details – under what circumstances?
 - **When you move**
 - **When they send out a letter**
- What do you do if you're going to be away on Election Day? PROBE –
 - Do you pre-poll or not?

- Yes
- Are you aware of what to do and where to go to organise a pre-poll vote?
- Yes
- What do you do if you're out of your electoral area on the day?
- **Absentee vote and postal vote**

5. Proof of identity (POI) (5min)

- Do you think you need POI when enrolling and voting?
 - **Not if they do job properly**
 - **Important – re:- fraud**
 - **It will sort itself out**
- What do you normally do when you go and vote - do you have POI on you or not?
- **No proof of identity**
- .How do you feel about providing POI when you go and vote?
- **Wouldn't bother showing proof of identity**
 - Is this culturally appropriate?
 - **Not culturally appropriate**
 - Will it be a bit sensitive for people in the community a part of the stolen generation?
 - **Would be very sensitive. They don't really know who their family are and where they come from. It would hurt their feelings and bring up past feelings of hurt.**
 - Could there be issues with people in the community having valid ID on them or not?
 - **A lot of Indigenous people have no ID. They have never had their births registered.**
 - **You need ID for 18 plus card**
 - **Aboriginal people use names known as , not registered on birth certificate**
 - **A lot of Aboriginal people now are going back to their traditional cultural names and not the names registered on birth certificates**
 - **They are not changing their new names by deed poll.**
 - What kind of ID do you think should be appropriate?
- ID is an issue**
- What are the benefits/disadvantages of showing POI when voting?
 - **Stop corruption**
 - **Stop fraud**
 - **Stop vote rigging**
- Does showing POI change your attitude towards voting at all, or does it make no difference? PROBE – Some people might say it makes them feel like the government is watching/controlling them.
- **Proof of identity gives false hope**
- **Uncomfortable for some**

6. Barriers & influencers (5min)

- Are there any factors that make it hard to understand how enrolling, voting or the electoral system works? Or that may prevent your ability to vote? What about within your wider community?

- **Barriers are not having the information in simple language**
- **Process can be quite complicated for some people**
- **People should be given opportunity to get educated before election on voting**
- What role do others in the community play in educating people about voting and elections? PROBE – Elders? Any members of the community involved in the political process? LOOK FOR ANY EXAMPLES
 - **Those that have experience are good mentors**
 - **Some elders can show others how to vote**
 - **A lot of people too shame to ask for help due to lack of education.**
- Which people do you think are important to use as educators in keeping the people in your community well informed about how enrolment and voting works?
 - **Fully trained electoral officers informed on how to assist people. That's what they get paid for.**

7. Moving Process (10min)

- Imagine that you had to move house. What would be on your list of things to do? LOOK FOR MENTION OF UPDATING ENROLMENT DETAILS
- What would be your priorities in terms of updating your address details? GET PARTICIPANTS TO RANK –
 - Bills – electricity, water, phone, etc.
 - Leisure – RSLs, video stores, etc.
 - Drivers licence
- Where would updating your enrolment details fit into this ranking?
 - **Find a good removalist so your gear doesn't get wrecked**
- Do you know whether you have to update your enrolment details or not?
- EXPLAIN THAT IT'S BEST THAT YOU DO UPDATE YOUR DETAILS – When would you do this? (i.e. when you move or when an election's on?)
- What would remind you that you need to update your details?
 - **Everyone knows about changing address through advertisements and media, newspapers and radio.**
- What kind of places would you like to see a message reminding you that if you've moved, you need to update your details?
 - **Television**
 - **Newspapers**
 - **Radio**
 - **Message on the bottom of your power (electricity bill), because when you move, you always have to get your power reconnected to a new address. A reminder on that would be good on the electricity bill.**

8. Message delivery and role of others (10min)

- Are there any other places we haven't talked about that you currently go to for information on enrolling; voting or that can answer questions you have about an election? EXPLORE
 - **Court houses**

- **Let young people know when your 18, you have to vote**
 - **Local organizations and trustworthy agencies**
 - **Australian Electoral Commission**
- What sources of information about enrolling or voting would you consider most trustworthy?
 - **Correct information**
 - **Easy to understand**
- Where would you prefer to receive information about enrolling, voting and the election generally – through which sources? PROBE
 - Verbal? Written? Or both?
 - **Both. Verbal and written**
 - **Link on a website**
 - Who from?
 - **Australian Electoral commission. The information would be accurate and up to date.**
- What role do other members of your family play in keeping you informed about enrolment or voting during elections?
 - **Family keep reminding you, if you don't vote you will be fined**
 - **They say make sure you are in town and if your not going to be then let them know before you leave town**

9. Testing motivators for voting (10min)

- There are a number of different reasons that the Australian Electoral Commission can use to tell you why it's important to vote. I'm going to read out 6 different reasons that they have developed, and I want you to tell me how important this reason is to you personally.
- READ OUT EACH STATEMENT AND AFTER EACH ONE, ASK: Is this a motivating reason to vote for you personally? Why/Why not?
- ONCE YOU HAVE GONE THROUGH ALL STATEMENTS, ASK EACH PERSON IN THE GROUP TO PICK THE ONE STATEMENT THAT MAKES THEM FEEL THE MOST MOTIVATED TO VOTE AND WHY. READ THE STATEMENTS OUT AGAIN IF NECESSARY/SHOW THEM TO THE GROUP

APPENDIX D – TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER RESPONDENTS

Torres Strait Islander Demographic Survey

1. How old are you?

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 18-24 years | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 25-29 years | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 30-34 years | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 35-39 years | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 40-44 years | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 45-54 years | 4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 55-64 years | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 65+ years | 1 |

2. Are you

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Male | 4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Female | 4 |

3. Which of the following best describes your work status?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Working part-time | 4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Home duties | 3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student – Full time | 1 |

4a. Do you speak one or more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages at home?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes – How many (1-3) | 6 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No | 2 |

4b. How comfortable are you with reading English? (Tick one)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Can read a bit | 2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Can read well | 6 |

5. Are you currently listed on an electoral roll?

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | 7 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure | 1 |

6. Have you **always** been listed on the electoral roll?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes - I have always been listed <u>on</u> the electoral roll | 6 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No - I have been <u>off</u> the electoral roll for a period of time | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure | 1 |

Torres Strait Islander Research Responses

Introduction

The group comprised four females and four males. The combined group ranged in age from 25 to 60-plus. The members of the group were urban Torres Strait Islanders and all had resided in Brisbane over the last five years. There were differing degrees of literacy in the group, with older participants having received less education than their younger counterparts. Alarming, there was little knowledge of the State and Australian Government electoral processes amongst the group; despite two members of the group [REDACTED].

It should be noted that six of the eight participants stated on their respective demographic survey forms that each person “had always been listed on the electoral roll”. The answers given by all participants in this survey group indicate that most, six of the eight, were not listed on the electoral roll or they had not been on the roll for some time. It would appear that it was personally embarrassing for participants to admit they had not been on the electoral roll and this maybe why they selected this response in their survey responses.

Voting, Elections & Democracy

All group members agreed that the first thought they had about elections was to enrol on the electoral roll to avoid a fine for not voting. There was a great degree of confusion amongst all participants regarding differences between the Queensland and Australian Government structures. For example, all group members thought that Queensland senators they have voted for represented them in Australian Senate and in the Queensland Parliament.

Seven of the eight participants declared that they were indifferent to voting. [REDACTED] (male in his early 30's) said if voting was not compulsory “I wouldn't vote because all the politicians are bullshit artists. They just want to buy your vote. So what's the point in voting?” A majority of males reflected this view.

However, the most senior man present, [REDACTED], (aged over 60-plus) stated that voting was important because:

Me, I don't trust the buggers so I go and see what they are saying and to know what is going on. It [voting] is a way to make sure you know about what is going and how the Government is working for your community. It's a way of choosing our leaders.

He also said that now that ATSIC was gone:

Torres Strait Islander people needed a bit more breathing space to understand better how the voting system works. Torres Strait Islanders not in the Torres Strait are on Aboriginal land and we have no voice. In the Torres Strait there is the Regional Authority (Torres Strait Regional Authority) who has almost done a good job but we (mainland Torres Strait Islander people) need a statutory body to represent us.

Amongst the females in the group, there was less criticism of politicians and the electoral process. They provided general comments but no strong criticism of the electoral process. Although, [REDACTED] (female aged early 30's) said they [politicians] say one thing but do another.”

All participants knew it was compulsory to vote. They have heard this message through the media, their children via schooling, and through personal knowledge that it was compulsory to vote. Also, over half of the group comprising three males ([REDACTED], [REDACTED] {aged 30-plus} and [REDACTED] {50-plus}) and two females ([REDACTED] {aged 60-plus} and [REDACTED] {aged late 20's}) said they had received fines for not voting in the past.

All participants knew that they had to vote. [REDACTED] (male, 50-plus) believed that “Jehovah's Witnesses don't have to vote because of their religion”. He also said a member of this religious order once wrote a letter for “me when I did not vote so I would not get a fine”.

All members of the group said they knew that they could enrol to vote at their local post office. The

post office was also cited as the most convenient place to find out about how to register for the electoral roll.

All respondents thought about enrolling to vote when an election was called. Over half of the participants agreed with this statement.

██████ (male, 30-plus) said: “I only know I have to vote when I receive a fine for not voting.” ██████ (female, 60-plus) also said that she knew she had “to vote when she gets a fine for not voting” and “if you don’t vote you have to wait another three years” to vote. ██████ (male, 50-plus) said when he moved from the Torres Strait region to Brisbane he received a letter asking him to remember to “get on the electoral roll” in the area he moved to which helped him enrol.

██████ said:

.... over half of the mainland Torres Strait Islander population are floaters [they do not stay in the same area for very long] and these people are not on the electoral roll. We need to tell this group to get on the roll so their voice can be heard. These people are silent voices In the Torres Strait the Regional Authority [Torres Strait Regional Authority] makes sure people are on the roll but most Torres Strait people are on the mainland and they don’t vote ...

We need more of that [letters, radio ads, Torres Strait Islander electoral officers] to tell our people to be on the electoral roll. We haven’t even started yet ... We want to know about Western civilization and the electoral commission and all that.

There’s an opportunity for us to learn these things. So we need to have some place where we can inform our countrymen, similar to what the [Electoral] Commission does for the rest of the population.

Democracy

No one person could define what the word democracy meant. Nor could any of the participants describe what a world without democracy would be like. The examples of North Korea and the China were provided to give an example of non-democratic nations. After these examples, ██████ stated that democracy meant “being able to choose your leaders”. All respondents then agreed that being able to choose a leader was what they understood democracy to be.

There needs to be greater community awareness of what democracy is and the role of elections in the democratic process. It was alarming that no participant was able to define what democracy is until a concrete example of a non-democratic nation (in this case China and North Korea) was provided. However, this suggests that the act of voting itself is more important than understanding the concept of what democracy is and that all members of this group would vote – though mainly to avoid being fined.

AEC & democracy

All members of the group thought that the Australian Electoral Commission ran elections for State and national elections. ██████ (female, early 30’s) stated:

The Electoral Commission runs the election. We use to pay them \$2M to run the ATSIC elections and they still didn’t do a good job.

However, all participants agreed that the AEC is the best body to inform people of the need to vote. The group agreed that the most effective way for the AEC to inform Torres Strait Islanders of the need to enrol and vote was through:

- Torres Strait Islander officers (visiting people in their community and to be present on voting day to support Torres Strait Islander people understand the electoral process) (all males and females agreed)

- A poster with plain English translated to Torres Strait Islander Creole with a diagram in Torres Strait Islander colours (blue, white, green and black) that depicts which houses of parliament an election is for and how the electoral system works (all males and females agreed)
- Schoolchildren telling their parents or carers about the electoral system and how to get on the electoral roll (all males and females agreed)
- Radio was a very good medium to remind people (all males agreed)
- Letters from the AEC were also very important for all females and one male in the group.

██████████ (male, 50-plus) stated that “there was not enough information” to tell people about how to vote. ██████████ (female, 30-plus) said “there was not enough information to get people [to enrol to vote] before an election.

██████████ (male, 60-plus) said that during ██████████ ... to get them to vote in elections.

██████████ stated that:

In the ATSIC elections you had a photo of the [of the candidates] and how you vote for. But in these ones [elections] you just have a name [on the ballot paper] and you don't know who you are voting for.

Knowledge about voting/enrolling/pre-poll voting

All participants knew the difference between state and federal elections. Though this knowledge seemed to be developed from media coverage of which election they were being asked to vote in. There was poor knowledge amongst all group members about Australia's electoral system. This led to significant confusion over the difference between the Queensland and Australian parliamentary systems.

For example, all respondents thought that senators elected to represent Queensland in the Australian government also represented their constituents in the Queensland State Government. ██████████ stated that:

I thought that they [senators] were in the Queensland Government because they were called 'the senator for Queensland'. Most people outside of the Torres Strait Islander community would also not know a lot about elections and how the government works.

All participants stated that they know to, and usually do, vote at their local school.

All participants knew that they had to re-enrol on the electoral roll if they had moved from an area in which they were enrolled to vote in. Approximately half the participants knew that they were able to re-enrol at their local post office.

All participants knew that they had to update their enrolment details when they had moved from one electorate to another.

Only one male participant, ██████████, (50-plus) could explain how to lodge a pre-poll vote and what is required to do so. He said he had done this before. However, there was little or no knowledge amongst the other seven participants about how to organize or lodge a pre-poll vote. He also said that they (AEC) take him off the roll a few times but they put him back [after he re-enrolled] when I move from the island [Torres Strait Island] to here [Brisbane].

██████████ (female 30-plus) said “we know now, but we didn't know before” about how to lodge a pre-poll vote. I know to go to the electoral office”. Up to half of the group stated that if they were away from their electorate on voting day that they would lodge an absentee vote with ██████████ stating that “I would lodge an absentee vote at the local school”.

Proof of identity

All members of the group agreed that proof of identify should be required to vote.

However, [REDACTED] (male 60-plus) said that:

You must remember that when you are going to vote those people (electoral officers) must know Torres Strait Islanders or Aboriginals. It is important that people working in the electoral booths know Torres Strait Islanders.

Most people did not take proof of identity with them when they went to vote. [REDACTED] (male 50-plus) said “Yes, I do ... so they know who I am.” He was the only one of eight to say he carried proof of identity.

There was concern in the group expressed by [REDACTED] (male 30-plus) and [REDACTED] (female 30-plus) that the current proof of identity method [of publicly provide their name to an electoral officer to identify a person enrolled on the electoral roll) allowed others to know personal details about them. [REDACTED] said that she was concerned about “people coming in and checking your name on the electoral roll to find out where you live and this is dangerous. It should be confidential.”

[REDACTED] said that:

When you are going up [to register on voting day to receive ballot papers] and you go there to vote the people [electoral officers] ask you for your name and address and anyone could say they are you and get your address. You can get anyone’s name and address and use it.

[REDACTED]: “They don’t ask you for ID or anything.”

[REDACTED]: “Like for me, I get confused too because I have two [first] names, my play name and my grown-up name. Sometimes when I go into vote I think which name is it now. So I look at the paper (electoral roll) and I see yes, that is my name.

All participants thought that proof of identity was not required when voting.

Most members of the group thought that having to produce proof of identity was a good thing. [REDACTED] stated that “I don’t mind because [it means] no-one can use my name. It’s safer because someone can (currently) come up and use your name.”

People suggested that Pension cards or Medicare cards could be used as proof of identity. [REDACTED] said “pension cards are good because most people have them”. However, [REDACTED] said that “in saying that too if someone lost there card someone could use their card to”. There was general concern over the effectiveness of this type of proof of identity.

[REDACTED] (aged 60-plus) said “the driver’s licence was the best [because it has your photo] to use” as identification. However, [REDACTED] pointed out that [REDACTED] did not have a licence. [REDACTED] also said a licence was not the best proof of identity as not everyone has one, or they could have lost it”.

Barriers & influencers

All group members felt that there was a “lack of appropriate information about the electoral system” which was a key barrier to enrolling to vote. [REDACTED] stated that:

There is nothing there [regarding electoral information] that attracts Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. There is nothing there that attracts us or that is [relevant to] Torres Strait Islanders, like [resources such as] posters with colours that reflect Torres Strait Islanders”.

I don’t think you can depend on Elders promoting information to get us to vote, because it’s got to come from outside that area [the Elders] for people to get it. Elders don’t have the time, resources or energy to do this”.

I think it would be really good to get footballers like Matty Bowen or Jonathan Thurston or Cathy Freeman, high profile people, to encourage people to vote and to promote it. Because if you see someone like that who is seen in the community to promote this you tend to take more notice than if you've just got local identities. With local identities you think 'oh the big noters over there'. Especially for young people to encourage them to vote because the old voters are gone (deceased) basically and you want to encourage younger people to vote".

Moving Process

Only one participant has changed their details after moving. [REDACTED]: "That's the last thing you think about when moving is to change your electoral details. That's the last thing you think about.

Ranking of things to do when moving. All participants ranked the order of importance for changing personal details. These are:

- Electricity
- Phone
- Gas
- Driver's licence
- Video shop membership
- Electoral roll details

Centrelink was listed as a key location, with the post office as the second point, as the best places to update a person's electoral roll information. [REDACTED] (male 60-plus) however, pointed out that it was hard for "a mother with six kids and no money to get to a Centrelink or post office to enrol".

[REDACTED] suggested that electoral information could also:

Be in the TAB ... as people go there too. They could also advertise it on the backs of toilets too because it's good as you are sitting there and you can read it.

Message delivery and role of others

The group agreed that more information needed to be given "in the schools". [REDACTED] said:

[Telling Torres Strait Islander schoolchildren about electoral processes] would get kids to bring this message home to their parents.

When they have these big functions like NAIDOC and Stylin Up the (Electoral) commission should have a high profile (Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander) person go to it and give this information. Carry bags would be good to promote this information.

[REDACTED] said that this type of promotion at key community events was "like a drawcard" and would attract community members to collect information about the electoral process.

All group members agreed that "Torres Strait Islander people were most important to tell their countrymen about the electoral process". [REDACTED]:

It would be good to have Torres Strait Islander people there [in the electoral area on election days] because older people can't understand the information and they will explain it to them in Broken English or Creole.

Written and verbal information from the Australian Electoral Commission were nominated as the best and most reliable sources of information. No websites were mentioned by the group as tools that have been accessed to learn about electoral information. All group members did not have, or expressed a high degree of computer literacy or undertook regular Internet usage.

9. Testing motivators for voting (10min)

<p>Motivator</p>	<p>General response from the group to this motivator (include any issues identified and quotes, where possible)</p>
<p><i>The heartbeat of democracy</i></p>	<p>██████: <i>Most people don't know what democracy is. It sounds good for the first part of the sentence but people wouldn't know what democracy is. Everyday person in the street doesn't know, unless you are politically minded then you would know.</i></p> <p>The whole group agreed that this was unsuitable for this reason and nominated this slogan as second worst.</p>
<p><i>The power to be heard</i></p>	<p>██████: <i>This is good, but unless you are politically minded you won't understand the words. It explains more than the first one".</i></p> <p>██████: <i>This our people sabe (or understand) and they (Torres Strait Islander people) have got to know the truth. These guys (politicians) are not our bosses. They listen to us.</i></p> <p>The group rated this better than the first. Overall, the group thought that this was the best slogan.</p>
<p><i>It's compulsory to vote</i></p>	<p>The threat of being fined for not voting encouraged all members of the group to vote. The group thought that this was okay because it explained that everyone had to vote or they would be fined.</p> <p>██████: <i>It's a bad message but that's why everyone votes anyway".</i></p> <p>██████: <i>You are (the AEC) speaking the truth. No good gammin (lying) because this is the truth."</i></p> <p>This was voted number two by all participants.</p>
<p><i>It's your responsibility</i></p>	<p>██████ – <i>It's our responsibility to vote and get involved.</i></p> <p>██████ – <i>It let's you know that you have responsibility and you should take it. It says that you are in a team and you shouldn't let your country down.</i></p> <p>██████ – <i>Well, the government has let us down, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. They've taken everything away.</i></p> <p>This was ranked as number three.</p>
<p><i>The patriotic thing to do</i></p>	<p>██████: <i>You see that you just think America.</i></p> <p>██████: <i>No it's rubbish. Put him last on the list.</i></p> <p>██████:</p>

	<p><i>You see George Bush when you hear that.</i></p> <p>This was voted as the least popular slogan because of its jingoistic language and connotations.</p>
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The ranking was:

First - *The power to be heard*

Second - *It's compulsory to vote*

Third - *It's your responsibility*

Fourth - *The heartbeat of democracy*

Fifth - *The patriotic thing to do*

APPENDIX E – DISCUSSION GUIDE

PLEASE GET ALL PARTICIPANTS TO COMPLETE THE 1-PAGE DEMOGRAPHICS SHEET PRIOR TO THE START OF THE GROUP

PLEASE REINFORCE THAT THIS INFORMATION IS CONFIDENTIAL

1. Introduction (5min)

- Thank everyone for their time; Introduce self; Explain role of research (i.e. *“to talk about voting and enrolling to vote in elections”*)
- Explain rules, i.e.
 - It’s important that everyone has an opinion
 - Be honest and say what you really think
 - Speak one at a time
- Explain confidentiality – your input will be aggregated into a report where only first names are used
- Get each person in group to introduce themselves – name, age, who they live with, when the last time they voted was?

2. Voting, Elections & Democracy (25min)

- How do you feel about the process of voting?
 - How important is voting to you? Why do you say that?
- When you hear there’s an election coming up, what are the first things you think about? PROBE - And *then* what do you think about – what other thoughts, associations or feelings come to mind?
- Some people in the community think about voting as “white man’s business”. What do you think and why?
- Is voting compulsory? IF YES - Who for – what types of people?
- Why do we have two ballot papers?
- EXPLORE HOW PARTICIPANTS IN THE GROUP CURRENTLY USE THE 2 DIFFERENT BALLOT PAPERS. USE REAL BALLOT PAPERS AS STIMULUS WHEN SEEKING THEIR RESPONSES
- What does the word democracy mean to you? PROBE -
 - How important is a democracy to you? Why do you say that?
 - What comes to mind when you hear this word? PROBE - Do you associate this word with elections?
 - What kinds of images do you associate with a democracy? What kind of world has a democracy? MODERATOR TO LIST KEY IMAGES THE GROUP COMES UP WITH ON ONE SIDE OF A FLIPCHART
 - What kinds of images do you associate with a world that has no democracy? USE OTHER HALF OF FLIPCHART TO LIST THESE KEY IMAGES WITH GROUP
- If voting wasn’t compulsory, would you still do it? PROBE -

- Some people say that a true democracy is when everyone has a say so that's why it's important to vote - would you agree or not? Why?

3. AEC & democracy (5min)

- Who runs elections?
- What do you think the role of this body/organisation is?
- How should the body/organisation that looks after elections speak to you about them? What kinds of things should they be telling you?
- How can this body make a democracy relevant to you and/or other people in your community?

4. Knowledge about voting/enrolling/pre-poll voting (15min)

- Some people know a lot about Australia's electoral system while other people don't know very much. Where do you think you fit?
- Does anyone know the difference between state and federal election systems? IF YES – what is the difference?
- In terms of voting, when do you think about voting? Is it only at election time or not?
- Do you need information on where to go and how to vote on Election Day or not? IF YES - where would you find that information?
- In terms of enrolling, when do you think about your enrolment details (IF NECESSARY SAY: "your name and address kept on the electoral roll")? Is it only at election time or not?
- Do you ever get worried about your enrolment details being on file with the "government"?
- What does "re-enrolling" mean? How would you go about it?
- When do you have to update your enrolment details – under what circumstances?
- What do you do if you're going to be away on Election Day? PROBE –
 - Do you pre-poll or not?
 - Are you aware of what to do and where to go to organise a pre-poll vote?
- What do you do if you're out of your electoral area on the day?

5. Proof of identity (POI) (5min)

- Do you think you need POI when enrolling and voting?
- What do you normally do when you go and vote - do you have POI on you or not?
- How do you feel about providing POI when you go and vote?
 - Is this culturally appropriate?
 - Will it be a bit sensitive for people in the community a part of the stolen generation?
 - Could there be issues with people in the community having valid ID on them or not?
 - What kind of ID do you think should be appropriate?

- What are the benefits/disadvantages of showing POI when voting?
- Does showing POI change your attitude towards voting at all, or does it make no difference? PROBE – Some people might say it makes them feel like the government is watching/controlling them.

6. Barriers & influencers (5min)

- Are there any factors that make it hard to understand how enrolling, voting or the electoral system works? Or that may prevent your ability to vote? What about within your wider community?
- What role do others in the community play in educating people about voting and elections? PROBE – Elders? Any members of the community involved in the political process? LOOK FOR ANY EXAMPLES
- Which people do you think are important to use as educators in keeping the people in your community well informed about how enrolment and voting works?

7. Moving Process (10min)

- Imagine that you had to move house. What would be on your list of things to do? LOOK FOR MENTION OF UPDATING ENROLMENT DETAILS
- What would be your priorities in terms of updating your address details? GET PARTICIPANTS TO RANK –
 - Bills – electricity, water, phone, etc.
 - Leisure – RSLs, video stores, etc.
 - Drivers licence
- Where would updating your enrolment details fit into this ranking?
- Do you know whether you have to update your enrolment details or not?
- EXPLAIN THAT IT'S BEST THAT YOU DO UPDATE YOUR DETAILS – When would you do this? (i.e. when you move or when an election's on?)
- What would remind you that you need to update your details?
- What kind of places would you like to see a message reminding you that if you've moved, you need to update your details?

8. Message delivery and role of others (10min)

- Are there any other places we haven't talked about that you currently go to for information on enrolling; voting or that can answer questions you have about an election? EXPLORE
- What sources of information about enrolling or voting would you consider most trustworthy?
- Where would you prefer to receive information about enrolling, voting and the election generally – through which sources? PROBE
 - Verbal? Written? Or both?
 - Who from?

- What role do other members of your family play in keeping you informed about enrolment or voting during elections?

9. Testing motivators for voting (10min)

- There are a number of different reasons that the Australian Electoral Commission can use to tell you why it's important to vote. I'm going to read out 6 different reasons that they have developed, and I want you to tell me how important this reason is to you personally.
- READ OUT EACH STATEMENT AND AFTER EACH ONE, ASK: Is this a motivating reason to vote for you personally? Why/Why not?
- ONCE YOU HAVE GONE THROUGH ALL STATEMENTS, ASK EACH PERSON IN THE GROUP TO PICK THE ONE STATEMENT THAT MAKES THEM FEEL THE MOST MOTIVATED TO VOTE AND WHY. READ THE STATEMENTS OUT AGAIN IF NECESSARY/SHOW THEM TO THE GROUP

That's it - Thank for time and provide incentive.

Demographic Survey

How old are you?

- 18-24 years
- 25-29 years
- 30-34 years
- 35-39 years
- 40-44 years
- 45-54 years
- 55-64 years
- 65+ years

Are you

- Male
- Female

3. Which of the following best describes your work status?

- Working full-time
- Working part-time
- Retired
- Home duties
- Student – Full time
- Student – Part time

4a. Do you speak one or more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages at home?

- Yes – How many (_____)
- No

4b. How comfortable are you with reading English? (Tick one)

- Cannot read at all
- Can read a bit
- Can read well

5. Are you currently listed on an electoral roll?

- Yes
- No

- Not sure

6. Have you **always** been listed on the electoral roll?

- Yes - I have always been listed on the electoral roll
- No - I have been off the electoral roll for a period of time
- Not sure