



*Young people's views are often drowned out by more powerful interest groups, especially when it comes to elections. It is important they have a voice in the political process, both through exercising their right to vote and having their concerns listened to by all political parties."*

# Federal Election Youth Poll results

Photo courtesy of Daniel Noone

*Young people struggle to have their voices heard in the political arena and the 2007 Federal Election campaign has been no exception.*

In the race for votes, many politicians are guilty of fobbing off young people's concerns despite many policy decisions acutely affecting them. For those under 18, many politicians take the approach that if you can't vote, they can't hear you.

Every year since 1992, the Democrats have issued a poll to find out how young people are faring, in terms of education, work and health, and to gauge their attitudes on a range of issues. The results are published and presented to the Parliament - to directly convey young people's opinions to decision makers.

This year, in the lead up to the Federal election, I have sought to give young people aged from 15 to 20 – both those eligible and ineligible to vote - a forum to voice their opinions on politics, Parties and the issues they want addressed.

**We asked young people: if they are enrolled to vote; who they will vote for; what issues concern them most; and, who they trust to deliver political information.**

The findings include that the environment and the threat of global warming is a major concern to young people and many distrust all traditional sources of political information.

## **Results**

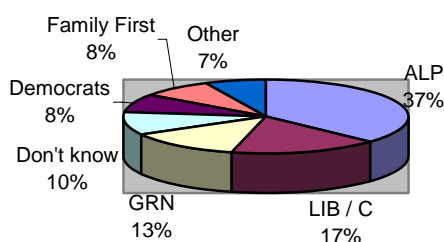
1. More than half of the 2007 Federal Election Youth Poll respondents – 54% - are enrolled to vote.
2. Of those enrolled to vote, an overwhelming majority of respondents, 90.5%, are first time voters.

The *Sydney Morning Herald* reports that despite an advertising campaign, 340,000 young Australians aged between 18-24 are not enrolled to vote in this election.<sup>1</sup>

Earlier this year, the Government passed legislation limiting the time to enrol after an election is called.

- Following current polling trends, the highest proportion of respondents – 37% - reported they will vote for the Labor Party in the Federal election. Liberal /Coalition Parties came in second with 17%, with Democrats on 8%, and the Greens on 13%.

#### Voting Intentions

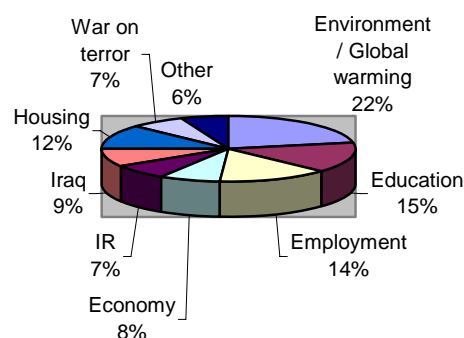


- A significant proportion of respondents – 22% - list the environment and global warming as the issue of most concern to them. 15% of respondents are most concerned with accessibility and cost of education, followed by employment at 14%.

Other issues of concern to respondents are animal rights and drought relief.

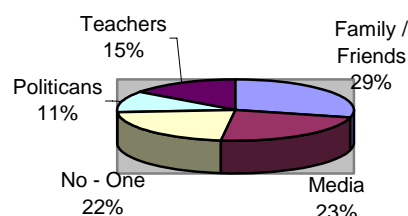
1. Paul Bibby "One in five novices misses the boat" *Sydney Morning Herald* 27/10/07

#### Issues



- Consistent with past Youth Polls, family and friends are the most trusted sources of political information, scoring 29% of the vote. The media, which performed badly in past Youth Polls, has improved its standing, gaining 23% of votes. Alarming, a large proportion of respondents – 22% - revealed they trusted no one to convey this information.

#### Trust



#### Summary

Like all Australians, young people deserve attention and respect come election time, and this election youth poll is just one way we seek to represent the concerns of the youth of Australia.

The Federal Election Youth Poll 2007 (also available at [www.natashastottdespoja.com](http://www.natashastottdespoja.com)) continues a commitment to recognizing the contributions of young people and ensuring their views are included in the political process.