The ANUPoll on Indigenous Issues: Suggesting Sophistication and Support for Recognition

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Overview of ANU Poll Indigenous

• ANU Poll is a quarterly survey of Australian public opinion. The topic of each survey is an issue of national importance
• ANU Poll is conducted for The Australian National University (ANU) by the Social Research Centre
• September-October 2014 Poll had a focus on Indigenous issues.
• 1,201 respondents; response rate of 25.4%
• The results have been weighted to represent the national population.
• The poll’s margin of error is ± 2.5 per cent.
Overview of ANUPoll Indigenous, cont …

Questionnaire design

• Average length of interview ~13 minutes
• Standard questions asked on each ANUPoll
• Questions on specific topic (~4-5 minutes)
  – mix of questions asked in earlier surveys (e.g., Australian Election Study; Rights in Australia 1991-92)
  – questions asked in other countries
  – New questions
Overview of ANUPoll Indigenous, cont …

Topics covered in ANUPoll Indigenous

• Most important problems facing Australia
• Importance of specific Indigenous issues
• Views about situation of Indigenous people today
• Views about changes that have been happening in Australia (e.g., land rights)
• Responsibility for problems faced by Indigenous people
• Attitudes towards policies aimed at improving Indigenous education and employment
• Opinion about constitutional change
Importance of Indigenous issues

• 1% of respondents nominated Indigenous affairs as being the 1st or 2nd most important issue facing Australia. This is consistent with previous ANUPoll findings.

• Most commonly identified issues were the economy and jobs (41%), immigration (20%) and terrorism (19%) and better government (15%)
How important for Australia do you regard the following issues relating to Aboriginal people? (%)

- Social disadvantage: 11 Important, 86 Not important
- Self-determination: 15 Important, 81 Not important
- Constitutional recognition: 18 Important, 78 Not important
- Welfare dependence: 11 Important, 85 Not important
- Land rights and Native Title: 26 Important, 69 Not important
Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the situation of Aboriginal people in Australia today? % agree/strongly agree

- Aboriginal people should be able to decide for themselves their way of life: 80%
- Aboriginal people’s level of disadvantage justifies extra government assistance: 63%
- In the long run, it would be best for Aboriginal people to be completely assimilated into Australian society: 59%
- As the first Australians, Aboriginal people should have special cultural protection that other groups don’t have: 58%

Per cent
Aboriginal people should be able to decide for themselves their way of life? (%)
As the first Australians, Aboriginal people should have special cultural protection that other groups don’t have? (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>1991-92</th>
<th>2014</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No opinion</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
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</table>
In the long run, it would be best for Aboriginal people to be completely assimilated into Australian society?, 1991-92 to 2014 (%)
Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the situation of Aboriginal people in Australia today? % agree/strongly agree

- Injustices towards aboriginal people are now all in the past: 34%
- Recognising land rights and Native Title of Aboriginal people is unfair to other Australians: 30%
- Aboriginal people are now treated equally to other Australians: 30%

Per cent
... changes that have been happening in Australia. .. whether you think the change has gone too far, not gone far enough, or is it about right?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not gone far enough</th>
<th>About right</th>
<th>Gone too far</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government intervention in Aboriginal communities</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government help for Aborigines</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land rights</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Views about extent of government help for Aborigines, 1993 to 2014 (%)
Views about extent of land rights, 1987 to 2014 (%)
Competing Principles in Indigenous Affairs in a Left/Right Political Space

Individual Equality of Opportunity

- Socio-economic Equality in Population sub-groups
- Individual Choice/Autonomy
- Individual Legal Equality
- Group Choice/Autonomy
- Group Guardianship
- Group Difference & Diversity
Responsibility for problems experienced by Indigenous people, Australia and Canada (%)

- Aboriginal people have largely caused their own problems:
  - Australia: 17%
  - Canada: 26%

- The problems have been caused primarily by the attitudes of other citizens and government policies:
  - Australia: 51%
  - Canada: 56%

- Both equally:
  - Australia: 32%
  - Canada: 18%
Universities should have special programs and admission standards for Aboriginal people? (%)
Governments should provide extra help for Aboriginal people to gain employment? (%)

- Strongly agree: 22%
- Agree: 47%
- Disagree: 20%
- Strongly disagree: 7%
- Don’t know: 4%
The private sector should do more to employ Aboriginal people? (%)

- Strongly agree: 22%
- Agree: 44%
- Disagree: 22%
- Strongly disagree: 5%
- Don’t know: 7%

Per cent
Constitutional change

• Australian Constitution was amended in 1967 to delete two references to Aboriginal people. While now having no references to Aboriginal people, the Constitution still contains two references to ‘race’, including the section 51(xxvi) power which enables the Commonwealth to make ‘special’ laws on Indigenous issues.

• An Expert Panel on Constitutional Recognition of Indigenous Australians was appointed in December 2010 and reported in January 2012 (Dodson and Leibler Co-Chairs, 2012).
Constitutional change, cont..

2013-2014 Joint Select Committee of the Australian Parliament suggesting possibility of:

• repealing the two current references to ‘race’
• inserting new section that both recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and gives the Commonwealth a new power to make laws with respect to them.

The ANUpoll asked respondents whether they would support or oppose changes to the Constitution in order to:

• remove clauses that discriminate on the basis of race; and
• recognise the “continuing cultures, languages and heritage” of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as a basis of Commonwealth law making.
Would you support or oppose changes to the Constitution in order to remove clauses that discriminate on the basis of race?
support or oppose changes to the Constitution in order to recognise the ‘continuing cultures, languages and heritage’ of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as a basis of Commonwealth law making?
Would you support or oppose changes to the Constitution in order to ...?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Remove clauses that discriminate on the basis of race</th>
<th>Recognise the ‘continuing cultures, languages and heritage’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-34 years</td>
<td>Strongly support 51</td>
<td>Support 35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-54 years</td>
<td>Strongly support 49</td>
<td>Support 33</td>
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<td>55+ years</td>
<td>Strongly support 39</td>
<td>Support 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-34 years</td>
<td>Strongly support 49</td>
<td>Support 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-54 years</td>
<td>Strongly support 46</td>
<td>Support 27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Would you support or oppose changes to the Constitution in order to ...?