
In case you've been wondering how young people would have voted in this State election, here are some results you might be interested in...

In the run up to the election I talked about how I wanted to highlight the interest of young people in having a right to vote from the age of 16. We launched the 'Democracy in Action' project in partnership with the Centre of Democracy and the Electoral Commission SA. Part of this was to carry out an 'experiment', to poll some young people and see what the outcome would be.

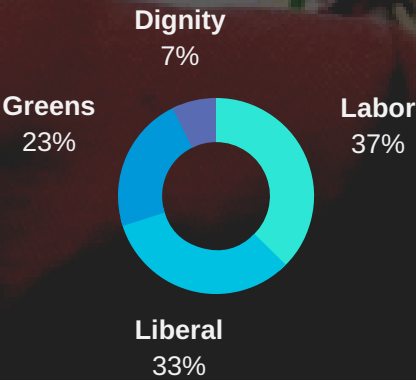
The week before the election three high schools in the Adelaide Metropolitan area (CBC, Scotch and Thebarton Senior College) and the UN Youth State Conference, held their own mock elections and voted across two electorates (Adelaide and Waite). On Election Day, we turned the Institute Building into a polling centre and young people aged 16 and 17 came out to vote. Overall we had 336 votes and with 91% of the votes counted, the results are in. For a full breakdown of how young people voted in this mock election then have a look at the graphics (below).

Our poll was somewhat limited and we have compared just the four parties that appear in both Adelaide and Waite (Liberal, Labor, Greens and Dignity). What's interesting about these results is that the Greens polled really well with young people in their first preference votes in Waite and Adelaide, (47.3% & 23% respectively). This seems to reflect what young people have told me repeatedly that they care about issues and less about party policies. Clearly and probably not surprising environment, sustainability and climate change are big ticket items for our young people.

But what does this all really mean for young people and their future in democracy and the possibility of them being able to vote before the age of 18? These results obviously haven't affected any official results but it gives us an idea of how they could have affected the outcome. It also helps us see the level of engagement of young people and what issues young people are interested in. One young person said he thought this process would encourage more high school students to become interested in politics. Another said he would like to be able to vote so he could influence issues that affect young people such as creating more jobs in this state.

This project or experiment has been interesting for us to see such a high level of engagement and enthusiasm from 16 and 17 year olds. They gained practical knowledge of how to fill out a ballot paper and learned how to pre-enrol to vote before they turn 18. We found our social media was very active during the two weeks of this project. If anything it tells us that young people wanted to see this and discuss it and be involved. This is just the first step. The 'Democracy is Action' Project will continue and I am hoping there will be even more debate over how young people can be involved in decisions that affect their lives.

Percentage of first preference votes for Adelaide Electorate



Percentage of first preference votes for Waite Electorate

