



Young, haters and jokers wanted for national voting study

The Voter Choice Project, an academic study investigating how voters decide who to vote for, is seeking more young voters, and people who hate politics, or think voting is a joke, to round out the sample.

Project director Raphaella Kathryn Crosby, who is conducting the research as part of her PhD through the University of Technology Sydney (UTS), says unsurprisingly, those who really like politics signed up quickly, but the full range of voters are needed to get a good understanding of Australians' voting decisions.

"We have had a lot of comments on the Facebook posts from people who say they aren't voting, or that voting is a joke or a waste of time.

"But they aren't signing up to the study, and we really need them to, because we aren't collecting data on Facebook.

Traditionally voting behaviour studies have a significant skew towards higher educated and politically interested people. This could result in arguably false indicators of confidence in the electoral system or support for compulsory voting, and the reasons why people vote the way they do are heavily skewed to heavy policy reasons like 'the economy' rather than social or media influences.

The study involves regular short surveys in the lead up to the election asking about different topics. In addition to deliberately seeking out those who are less interested in politics, the Voter Choice Project surveys have been designed with a lot of open text boxes so participants can write freely, and as much or as little as they like, about what is concerning them or their reasons for voting.

"I want to give those who hate politicians or voting, and those younger voters who maybe don't feel they understand it all yet, every opportunity to tell me they think they all suck, or the system is broken, or they don't have a clue... which is why I've worked hard to not lock respondents into answers," Ms Crosby said.

Any registered Australian voter can take part in the Voter Choice Project by signing up at www.voterchoice.com.au.

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