



Rural voters wanted for national study

The Voter Choice Project, an academic study investigating how voters decide who to vote for, is seeking more rural voters to take part in the study.

The Voter Choice Project is the first study of its kind in Australia, giving participants short, regular online surveys in the lead up to the next election to investigate **why** people vote for one party or another. This includes investigating both voting motivations such as supporting a party, or voting on the issues; and influential forces such as media, personal conversations and the formal election campaign.

Project director Raphaella Kathryn Crosby, who is conducting the studies as part of her PhD through the University of Technology Sydney (UTS), says rural and remote voters have very different issues and concerns, so it is really important to ensure that they are well documented.

“For voters, the Voter Choice Project is a great opportunity to be heard and say why they are voting the way they are.

“Coming from a rural background, both as a farmer’s daughter and cutting my political teeth in the complex and proud seat of New England, I know very well that rural voters are far more interested in what’s affecting their town, and their industries, than whatever someone in the city has decided to put in the national campaign platform.

“Yes, managing our waterways or drought is important – but rural life is far more complex than that, and rural voters have a lot on their minds.”

The 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.

“I want to give rural voters the opportunity to voice that complexity and all the things that they care about and think about when they come to vote, and hopefully be able to present that in a meaningful way that helps others understand what is going on,” Ms Crosby said.

Any registered Australian voter can sign up now to take part in the Voter Choice Project by signing up at www.voterchoice.com.au. All the questionnaires are online and can be done on a computer, phone or tablet.

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For more information email Raphaella Kathryn Crosby rkc@voterchoice.com.au

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