



Do independents like to party? The rise in independent and minor party MPs in Australian parliaments since 1970

Mark Riboldi, Ben Spies-Butcher & Phoebe Hayman

To cite this article: Mark Riboldi, Ben Spies-Butcher & Phoebe Hayman (2024) Do independents like to party? The rise in independent and minor party MPs in Australian parliaments since 1970, Australian Journal of Political Science, 59:3, 272-290, DOI: [10.1080/10361146.2024.2421519](https://doi.org/10.1080/10361146.2024.2421519)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10361146.2024.2421519>



© 2024 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group



[View supplementary material](#)



Published online: 28 Oct 2024.



[Submit your article to this journal](#)



Article views: 1727



[View related articles](#)



[View Crossmark data](#)

RESEARCH ARTICLE



Do independents like to party? The rise in independent and minor party MPs in Australian parliaments since 1970

Mark Riboldi ^a, Ben Spies-Butcher ^b and Phoebe Hayman ^c

^aUTS Business School, University of Technology Sydney, Sydney, Australia; ^bMacquarie School of Social Sciences, Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia; ^cPolitics, Media and Philosophy, La Trobe University, Bundoora, Australia

ABSTRACT

Commentary about the successes of the 'Teals' and the Greens in the 2022 federal election echoes scholarship regarding the ongoing fragmentation of major party support, weakening partisan alignment, and the rise of post-materialist voting since the 1970s. To explore the dynamics behind this trend, we construct a novel dataset of independent and minor party members of parliament elected to single-member electorates in Australian lower houses since 1970, empirically exploring the circumstances through which these candidates are successful. Tracing the rise of independent and minor party MPs, we observe that initially, these MPs often emerged through lower levels of government and outside organised politics, while, more recently they have succeeded through party structures and what we term 'party-like' forms of organisation. Our results suggest that political fragmentation is increasingly a challenge to conservative politics, especially via the rise of organised party-like independents, representing a realignment from the twentieth century.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Accepted 11 October 2024

KEYWORDS


Political fragmentation;
political realignment;
independents; minor parties;
Australian politics

Introduction

In Australia, as elsewhere, partisanship is declining while party switching and voter volatility rise, reaching a high point in the 2022 Australian federal election (Cameron et al. 2022, 17). This is a marked shift in Australian politics. Despite the ongoing presence of independent and minor party (IMP) members of parliament, the Australian electoral system has for decades been defined by its stability and partisan attachments (McAllister 2011). This stability has been particularly evident in the majoritarian lower houses of Australian parliaments, dominated by the major parties, where the desirability of majority government remains a recurrent campaign theme.

Australia developed a relatively stable two-party electoral system over the twentieth century. From the Second World War until 1990, the major parties (Labor and the

CONTACT Mark Riboldi  mark.riboldi@uts.edu.au

 Supplemental data for this article can be accessed online at <https://doi.org/10.1080/10361146.2024.2421519>.

© 2024 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, and is not altered, transformed, or built upon in any way. The terms on which this article has been published allow the posting of the Accepted Manuscript in a repository by the author(s) or with their consent.

Liberal-National Coalition) received approximately 90 per cent of the primary vote in each House of Representatives election (Raue 2022). Following three decades of declining major party primary voting, that proportion fell below 70 per cent in 2022, electing ten new IMP members of parliament (McAllister 2023, 312). Alongside the rise of minor parties, Australia now has more independents in its 151 seat House of Representatives than are represented in the over 1,500 single member electorates across the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada and New Zealand (Browne and Denniss 2024, 17).

Growing fragmentation and instability in voting patterns are often explained through the demise of the sociological foundations of the previous period of two-party dominance. The rise and stability of two-party politics is typically linked to the importance of class (Alford 1963; Charnock 1997). This saw voter loyalties divided between the Labor Party, established by trade unions, whose support was concentrated in urban working-class districts, and non-Labor parties, whose support was strongest in middle-class and rural districts (see Jones and McAllister 1989).

More recently, the salience of these industrial class divisions appears to be eroding, with scholars offering varied explanations for how social change is driving changing voting patterns and electoral representation. Post-industrial economic change has reduced industrial employment and trade union membership, weakening working-class loyalty to Labor (see Leigh 2006). Post-materialist values have also placed new issues on the agenda and potentially led more educated voters to rely less on party heuristics to guide their voting choices (Dalton 2000). As voters move away from strong partisan attachments, both trends suggest the potential for both greater fragmentation and volatility and a potential return to political dynamics like those in the nineteenth century, when parties were weaker and local political dynamics and identities stronger. Alternatively, critics of neoliberalism argue ideological convergence towards market-friendly policies has led frustrated voters to forms of 'anti-politics' (Humphrys, Copland, and Mansillo 2020; Mair 2013). Finally, new sociological divides around asset ownership, service employment and post-materialist values may be producing a more stable realignment of politics around different social cleavages or issue sets.

Our research explores these shifting electoral dynamics by focusing on patterns of parliamentary representation. While electoral fragmentation and volatility are not unique to Australia, the success of IMPs at the 2022 federal election suggests this electoral phenomenon may be more distinctive (see Nethery 2022). We focus our attention on IMP members in the lower houses of Australian parliaments, where fragmentation and realignment impact the formation of government. To do so, we have created a novel dataset of 124 IMP MPs elected to single member electorates in Australian lower houses since 1970. Using this data, we analyse the rise of these candidates, and the electoral and political factors that contribute to their success. In this paper, we refer to these individuals collectively as IMPs, but refer specifically to minor parties and independents, or candidates and MPs, where it is relevant to the discussion.

A key finding of political party scholarship is the importance of party brands and organisation in allowing candidates to effectively attract votes (see, for example, Nielsen and Vinæs Larsen 2014). Our questions therefore explore the potential alternative structures and resources IMP candidates may draw upon, and on the relationship between successful IMP candidates and the major parties. After reviewing the existing literature on parties and independents, and outlining our method for compiling and

analysing our dataset, we focus on three sets of questions. First, we explore the potential resources successful IMPs draw on to enter parliament. Here, we consider the extent to which IMPs defect from within the major party system, advance through lower levels of government, or develop alternative forms of organisation that mimic the features of the major parties that scholars identify as key to their success. Next, we look at features of seat contests themselves, asking whether IMPs succeed at by-elections or in the absence of incumbents, and whether they are aided by Australia's distinctive systems of preferential voting. Finally, we explore the partisan implications of the rise of IMPs by asking at whose expense IMPs initially succeed.

Our findings suggest the 2022 federal election is far from an anomaly. Since 1970, we identify 124 candidates who have been elected at least once as an IMP. Analysing our dataset against key electoral events, we abductively identify three periods of IMP success – from 1970 until 1995, 1996 until 2010 and since 2011. In the earlier period, IMPs were more likely to rise through lower levels of government, and from outside organised politics, with defections a persistent feature. Most recently, 'party-like' organisation has emerged, through either explicit endorsement or resource sharing amongst independents. In general, avoiding incumbents and benefiting from preferences are both common features of IMP success. Additionally, we find that while the impact of Australian minor parties on the major ones is mixed, independents have consistently been more dangerous for the Coalition. Taken together, we argue that while there is some evidence of an 'anti-politics' effect, the increasing organisation and partisan implications of IMP success suggests a more stable realignment of politics based on new social distinctions.

Partisanship, dealignment and party switching in Australia

Independents and minor parties (IMPs) have a long history in Australian parliaments, made possible by various features of Australian electoral systems. For example, the success of IMP campaigns in Australia is aided by preferential voting systems, removing the possibility of a 'wasted vote' when voting for IMP candidates. This impact is strengthened by mandatory voting, as disillusioned or angry voters are still compelled to vote (Curtin 2005, 1). For these voters, IMPs are often preferable to the opposing major party (Bolleyer and Weeks 2009; Weeks 2014, 607). IMPs can be elected in three-way contests so long as they can win more votes than one of the major parties (Monro 2019, 228), although the effects of this vary between different preferential voting systems (Sharman 2013; Weeks 2014). Moreover, the candidate-centred nature of most Australian lower houses may further decrease the importance of the party affiliation (Brancati 2008; Farrell and McAllister 2006). These observations go some way to explaining what makes IMPs possible, but they do not offer insights into what might contribute to making IMP success likely or explain changing patterns of IMP success across time.

Early federal politics in Australia lacked party unity or stability, as sub-national parliamentary cultures and party ecosystems collided at the federal level and contributed to low party voting unity in the first decade following federation (Godbout and Smaz 2016, 481). This era was defined by loose affiliations of 'local notables', until the subsequent development of the major party system in the 1940s (Sharman 2002, 3). In the

decades since, minor parties predominantly formed from splits or breakaway figures from major parties at the federal level, with the notable exception of the Australian Greens, an issue-based confederation that began primarily as state parties (Miragliotta 2012). Ghazarian (2012) characterises this as part of a broader pattern of minor party representation in the Senate, changing from secessionist to movement parties. Ghazarian further argues that where earlier minor party MPs were elected to act as watchdogs for the major parties, minor parties since 1984 have instead primarily sought to promote policy agendas. This argument focuses on Senate representation, and so, sidesteps the issue of how minor parties may impact government formation. The Greens, for example, have to date only ever made formal agreements with Labor minority governments.¹ Whether or not minor parties have signature policy areas, they can also have internal value propositions which lean more or less towards the left or right of the political spectrum.

Some scholars view minor parties such as the Democrats, Democratic Labor Party (DLP) and One Nation primarily as protest parties – vehicles through which voters express their displeasure with the major parties (Miragliotta and Sharman 2012). The election of independents has similarly been attributed to voters' dissatisfaction with major party offerings and desire for localised representation free of party control (Curtin 2004). Other scholars have noted the interaction of minor parties and preferences, which potentially allow voters to switch allegiances. For example, the DLP allowed middle class Catholics to switch from the Australian Labor Party (ALP) to the Liberal-National party Coalition (LNP), and the Democrats allowed small 'I' liberal voters to switch from the LNP to the ALP (see Green 2010).

These analyses of the type and purpose of IMP candidates offer differing characterisations of declining partisanship in Australia, aligning closely with broader discussions of fragmentation and partisan dealignment from the major parties. As summarised by Dalton (2000, 22) accounts of dealignment attribute it to either dissatisfaction with democracy and party systems, or as a post-material phenomenon associated with an increasingly educated, modern electorate which navigates politics without the heuristic of partisan identity. Alternatively, rather than moving away from partisanship altogether, voters may instead shift their loyalties to another party. Transfers of voter support that are substantial, persistent, and pervasive are characterised as *realignment*, while more temporary departures are described as *party-switching*. The literature has broadly looked at party-switching through the lens of declining satisfaction with political parties, either generally or specifically, and compared party-switching to abstention. Studies have found specific anti-party sentiment is more likely to be associated with party-switching, while more general political dissatisfaction is instead associated with abstention (Bélanger 2004; Dassonneville, Blais, and Dejaeghere 2015;).

Australia's system of compulsory voting inhibits the effect of general dissatisfaction, with these generally disaffected voters instead moving towards what Bélanger (2004) refers to as 'anti-party' options, such as One Nation. Broadly, disaffected voters are more likely to support candidates from anti-party parties, on the basis they 'reject politics as usual'. This effect is more pronounced when major parties are seen as failing to respond to or represent the views of voters (Copus et al. 2008, 7). Party switching has also been described as more likely when there are more options for voters to select from, increasing the voter's likelihood of finding an alternative they like (Mershon

2014). This attitude is arguably also present in support for independent candidates, who inherently represent an alternative to parties.

Voters are not the only figures who switch parties. Although comparatively rare in Australia's political history (Mershon 2014; Miskin 2003), Australian politicians have defected from the party through which they were first elected. The literature indicates that switching parties, particularly in political systems dominated by parties such as Australia's, is generally detrimental to the individual politician's chance of re-election (Miskin 2003, 21). Despite this penalty, MPs defecting from major parties may still ultimately benefit from incumbency effects. These benefits stem from the knowledge, connections and public profile that defectors have gained within a major party, and the financial and human resources that come with holding office, factors which are typically seen by scholars to be of significant electoral advantage (Miskin 2003; Rodrigues and Brenton 2010, 111).

Increasing voter volatility may suggest broader changes in political dynamics and a shift away from major parties in Australia. To understand what IMP success indicates about realignment and fragmentation, we pose the first two of our four research questions:

- (1) To what extent do IMPs defect from existing parties or instead challenge from outside the party system?
- (2) At whose expense do IMP candidates succeed?

IMP organisational structures and successes

'IMP' is used throughout this paper as a catch-all term for politicians who are not members of the major parties, which Jaensch and Mathieson (1998, 10–11) define as those parties that may be expected to win enough seats to form either government or opposition. In Australia, this is the ALP or the LNP coalition. Our approach to IMPs reflects the historical dominance of major parties in Australia and leaves us with broad residual categories for independents and minor parties (Gauja 2016, 15). The literature describes defining IMPs as a complex task due to their residual and heterogenous nature, as well as the varying forms IMPs have taken in different periods and contexts (Sharman 2013; Weeks 2009). With independents and minor parties often defined simply as 'not major parties,' as we have done here, the meaning of the definition shifts as the party system and the role or presence of major parties changes. In short, context matters.

Weeks (2009) and Singleton (1996) have pointed to the characteristics and benefits party candidates may have during campaigns as what makes independents different. Parties offer several advantages, including financing, a continuous organisation, and the support and mobilisation of members (Weeks 2009, 3). It seems likely these benefits would be stronger in major parties than in minor ones, with larger and more established party organisational machines, and larger numbers of existing partisan supporters. There are also benefits associated with party endorsement and reputation, leading to the distinction made between major party defectors and what are sometimes referred to as 'pure independents', those who do not have a history of party affiliation.

In addition to the benefits party candidates experience during the campaign, parties offer members the opportunity for career progression. The strength and stability of Australia's party system (Gauja 2015), with its highly professionalised sub-national level (Semenova and Dowding 2023) could be expected to encourage career movement by major party MPs between levels of government. However, the importance of localisation, candidate-focus and incumbency appears to deter movement between state and federal seats for incumbent major party MPs, as do restrictions on running for office while serving in another office (Semenova and Dowding 2023, 12–13). Evidence has therefore shown representatives' careers are tied to particular levels of government, with little movement between state and federal parliaments in Australia, although there are differences between states (AAroney and Sharman 2018, 394; Stolz 2003). There is an absence of research regarding IMPs' career progression between levels of government, another area to which our research speaks.

While major parties clearly offer their candidates endorsement and forms of organisation, these features may also exist within well-run or well-established independent or minor party campaigning efforts. These benefits are thus not necessarily unique to major parties. When it comes to minor parties, Miragliotta and Sharman (2012) have shown that enduring subnational party organisations are necessary in federal political systems for the longer-term growth and stability of minor parties, and a basis in local issues is an electoral advantage. Within independent campaigns, we are particularly interested in features of ongoing organisation that exist beyond the individual candidate, for example through endorsements and the sharing of constituent information, political resources, and donor bases. We refer to these organised structural benefits as 'party-like' features.

Party-like features include an organisation that holds campaign knowledge across elections, a supporter base beyond family and friends, and endorsement or other forms of support from other figures within the organisation or movement (Weeks 2009). While these features do not make independent groupings such as the community independents or 'Teals' political parties, they do provide these candidates with some of the organisational benefits for electoral campaigning that have hitherto been seen as unique to parties.

Party-like arrangements are not a recent development in Australia. Singleton (1996) discusses the use of persistent groups of volunteers in field campaigning efforts of successful independents, highlighting the volunteer numbers associated with successful candidates such as Brian Harradine and Clover Moore. Cathy McGowan's campaigns in 2013 and 2016 exhibited similar organised and ongoing efforts, demonstrating party-like organisational features coupled with a strong local connection (Hendriks 2017). Most recently, Hendriks and Reid (2023) note that although there are significant variations between the independent candidates elected in 2022, their election campaigns indicate more sophisticated and networked patterns of organisation than has previously been associated with independent campaigns. This local organisation has been supported by the presence of Climate 200 and 'Voices for' groups (Hendriks and Reid 2023; Nethery 2022). As indicated in Nethery (2022) and Hendriks' (2017) research on community and Teal independents, well organised and often well-resourced efforts that are strongly tied to their communities have led to the election of a number of IMPs.

Of course, not all IMP candidates exhibit or draw on the institutional strengths associated with major parties. From our point of view, we are interested in the extent to which party-like campaign organisation and endorsement may have developed over the years, represented in the form of electoral success. Taken together, our second set of research questions thus illuminate the impact of campaign and electoral institutions on IMP success:

- (3) Do IMP candidates rely on parties or party-like structures?
- (4) How reliant are successful IMP MPs on establishing their careers from lower levels of government?

Methods

To explore our research questions, we have created a novel dataset to chart the success of IMP candidates in Australian lower houses since 1970, provided as Appendix A. In addition to the federal House of Representatives, we included the five Australian states which have single member majoritarian systems to elect the house where the government is formed – New South Wales (NSW), Victoria (VIC), Queensland (QLD), South Australia (SA) and Western Australia (WA). Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory were excluded as they have proportionally elected lower houses. The Northern Territory was excluded due to having seats with low populations and distinct electoral dynamics (Sanders 2020). Moreover, while there are instances, particularly in SA and WA, of National Party (previously Country Party) MPs operating autonomously from the Liberal Party, we chose to group these MPs consistently within the LNP, particularly because the LNP is the dominant model of conservative party organisation across Australia, as is the ALP for centre-left politics.

The dataset was constructed primarily by consulting state and federal electoral commission websites. Wikipedia records of state and federal elections served as a useful supplement and site of cross-check, as the completeness and accessibility of information on electoral commission websites varies, especially for earlier periods, and Wikipedia contains (near) complete election results across our jurisdictions for the time period. It also frequently contains biographical information about elected parliamentarians, and in terms of political data is regarded as being accurate, though prone to omission regarding pre-2001 elected officials (Brown 2011). Only MPs who won an election as an independent or minor party candidate were included, thus the dataset excludes MPs who defected from a major party mid-term and then failed to be re-elected at the next election. Each successful IMP candidate was recorded only once, regardless of how many elections they won, as we were interested in who enjoyed electoral success, rather than the degree of the success. However, IMP candidates who moved across jurisdictions, such as from a state to the federal parliament, are recorded once for each jurisdiction to which they were successfully elected.

For each successful IMP candidate, we recorded electoral and political information that could assist in identifying trends relating to the research questions. For temporality and geography, we recorded the jurisdiction and year of a candidate's first election. To test partisan effects, we recorded the affiliation of the last candidate elected to the seat

prior to the election of the IMP candidate. In terms of electoral factors, we recorded whether the candidate was elected at a general election or a by-election, whether their primary opponent was an incumbent, and whether the candidate was elected despite initially trailing another candidate on primary votes. While preferential systems vary across jurisdictions, we suggest ‘coming from behind’ is a useful proxy for the impact of preferential voting.

The political factors we recorded about each candidate related to political pathways that may have supported a candidate’s election. We identified whether a candidate was preselected by a major party for their initial entry into parliament in that jurisdiction (before defecting, being deselected or being expelled). We recorded whether a candidate had represented that community at a lower level of government, either at a local council level or state government level. We documented the party affiliation of minor party candidates and, when it came to independent candidates, we noted whether they had been selected or supported by a party-like entity or group. This final category was informed by the election of the ‘Teal’ independents in 2022, who clearly benefited from forms of political organisation traditionally associated with parties, such as funding, advice and networks via Climate200 (Holmes à Court 2022) and the ‘Voices for’ group networks, as well as high profile independents such as Clover Moore (NSW state) and Cathy McGowan (VIC federal), who have endorsed and provided resources to the independent candidates who succeeded them (Helen Haines and Alex Greenwich respectively).

In total, the data set includes 124 unique entries. The authors undertook a separate audit to check the coding of each entry and double-check electoral records to identify any missed candidates. This process, and the resulting conversations, helped resolve queries, informed the definitions of the final categories, and abductively resulted in the three temporal periods in which the data is presented in the next sections: 1970 to 1995, 1996–2010 and 2011–2023. We argue 1996 marked something of a breakpoint due to the election of a number of socially conservative IMPs, the most prominent being Pauline Hanson, and the emergence of One Nation. We argue a second shift occurred following the 2010 federal election, which saw a minority government formed nationally, the first since 1940, changing the political dynamics associated with IMPs in houses of government.

Results & analysis

We begin with an overall analysis of IMPs over time. [Figure 1](#) reports the number of IMPs elected in five-year increments between 1970 and 2023, along with the cumulative total of IMPs elected over the time period. Along with the general rise over time, the most significant feature is the spike of IMPs elected between 1995 and 2000, 27 IMPs within five years, which is discussed in more detail below. Overall, our analysis suggests that the results of the 2022 federal election were not an anomaly. Instead, they are part of a general decades-long trend towards greater independent and minor party representation in Australian lower houses.

Next, we apply our temporal periods and break our results down by jurisdiction, shown in [Table 1](#). As we discuss below, the dynamics across the time periods reflect distinct regional dynamics. IMPs received early success in NSW, where independents

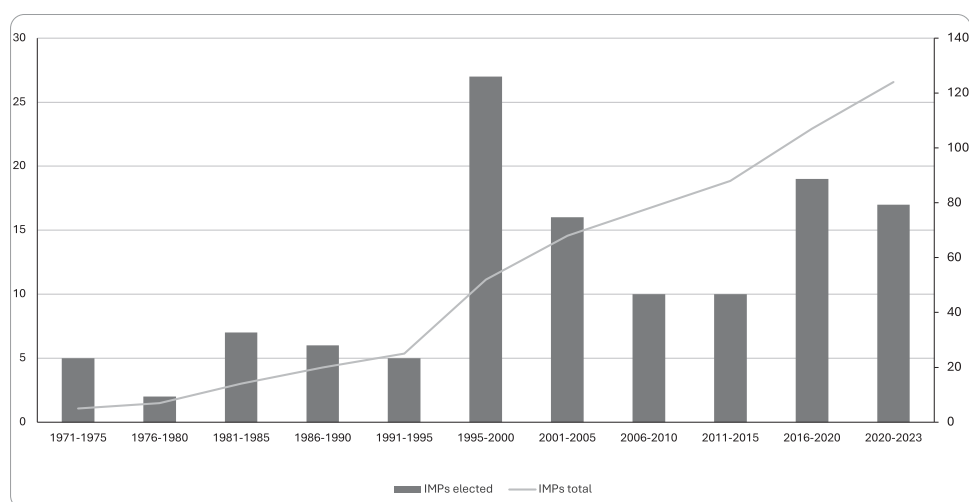


Figure 1. Australian independent and minor party MPs, 1970–2023.

Table 1. Australian independent and minor party MPs by jurisdiction, 1970–2023.

Place/Time	1970–1995	1996–2010	2011–2023	Total
Federal	2	11	15	28
New South Wales	12	9	12	32
Victoria	0	3	8	11
Queensland	2	17	7	26
Western Australia	1	6	0	7
South Australia	8	7	4	19
Total	25	53	46	123

initially dominated, and SA, which often involved defections from the Liberal Party. The middle period is dominated by the success of One Nation in Queensland, although several jurisdictions see IMP gains. Our final period has large IMP gains federally and in NSW, which both have large cross bench representation at the time of writing.

Below, we have organised the presentation of our results into the three major temporal periods – 1970–1995, 1996–2010 and 2011–2023 – followed by a section discussing partisanship. We observe a broad and increasing trend towards IMPs being elected through the support of party or party-like mechanisms (see Table 2), as well as a benefit for IMP candidates running against no incumbent, and an increasing reliance on preferences to

Table 2. Political mechanisms supporting the election of independent and minor party MPs, 1970–2023.

	Defected from major party	Preselected by minor party	Endorsed by party-like group	Prior lower level of government*	No supporting mechanisms
1970–1995	4 (16%)	4 (16%)	1 (4%)	11 (44%)	7 (28%)
1996–2010	13 (25%)	18 (34%)	4 (8%)	17 (32%)	8 (15%)
2010–2023	7 (15%)	21 (46%)	10 (22%)	11 (24%)	3 (7%)
Total	24 (19%)	43 (27%)	15 (12%)	39 (32%)	18 (15%)

*Unlike the first three categories, which are mutually exclusive, candidates can benefit from representing the community at a lower level of government and a party or party-like effect. Percentages are by time period, not category. For example, 16 per cent of IMPs elected between 1970–1995 defected from a major party.

Table 3. Electoral institutions affecting the election of independent and minor party MPs.

	No-incumbent: by-election	No-incumbent: general election	Overtake on preferences	Neither
1970–1995	6	10	10/24	2
1996–2010	9	22	26/53	9
2011–2023	5	15	30/46	7
Total/Proportion*	20 (16%)	46 (37%)	66 (53%)	20 (16%)

*This is the proportion of the total candidates—124. Candidates can benefit from both overtaking from preferences and the lack of an incumbent.

Table 4. Which major party Australian independent and minor party MPs took seats from, and via which political mechanism.

	ALP	LNP	Other	Total
Preselected by a minor party	19	18	6	43
Endorsed by a non-party group	0	9	6	15
Elected to a lower level of govt	6	17	1	24
Defected from a major party	6	16	2	24
None	7	10	1	18
Total	38	70	16	124

win from behind (see Table 3). Finally, we observe that successful IMP candidates have taken almost twice as many seats from the LNP as the ALP (Table 4). While minor parties account for half of ALP losses to IMP candidates, the LNP appear to more commonly lose to IMPs who were not preselected by a minor party, and in particular IMPs receiving support from party-like entities. We suggest that over time, successful IMP candidates have relied less on localism and defection and more on sustained organisation. These forms of organisation reflect distinct partisan differences and suggest a potential shift from forms of fragmentation towards realignment.

1970-1995 – emerging independence and fragmentation

The defining feature of IMP success in this early period is the lack of minor-party or party-like organisation. Table 2 demonstrates the increase over time of successful IMP candidates receiving aid through their involvement with a minor party or party-like group, by comparing from which political institutions they benefited.

Of the 25 successful IMPs within this period, only nine came through party or party-like mechanisms. In comparison, 11 successful IMPs in this time period benefited from having previously represented their community at a lower level of government (namely local government), around 44 per cent. The decline of this factor over time, the proportions dropping to 36 then 24 per cent over the time periods, suggest the particular significance of these ‘local notable’ independents during the earlier time period. In general, our analysis shows evidence of an effect for successful IMP candidates in having represented the community at a lower government. This contrasts with previous research that finds little movement between levels of government for major party candidates (Aaroney and Sharman 2018; Stolz 2003). This effect declines over time, while the proportion of IMP success through major party defection varies over time, suggesting that barriers to entry have been receding, or alternative pathways have been emerging.

We suggest these trends indicate that initial forms of fragmentation may be increasingly consolidating into more durable forms of organisation.

When looking at the election of IMPs by jurisdiction in this period, NSW and SA stand out, accounting for 12 and 8 respectively of a total 25 IMPs elected. In NSW, these IMP candidates won seats from both major parties (4 from the ALP, 7 from the LNP, and 1 from another independent MP). In comparison, most SA IMP candidates elected during this time (5 of 8) primarily won seats previously held by either the Liberal Party or by minor parties which had fragmented from the Liberals – the Liberal Country League, Liberal Movement, and the Democrats.

In NSW, 9 of the 12 successful IMP candidates entered parliament via a lower level of government. This includes notable NSW independent MPs John Hatton (elected 1973), Ted Mack (1981) and Clover Moore (1988). Mack has the distinction of representing his community as an independent at local, state and federal levels. Windsor and Rob Oakeshott (2003) also have multiple entry points in the dataset, having transitioned from state to federal parliament as independents, in 2001 and 2008 respectively. Oakeshott first entered parliament in 1996 as a National Party MP, then defected in 2002 to become an independent. In contrast, just 1 IMP from SA, Ted Connelly, came via a lower level of government in this period. Connelly also joined the ALP once in office. These findings suggest the significance of the ‘local notable’ effect in NSW, where fragmentation was a bipartisan affair, whereas in SA it appears to primarily represent splits amongst the centre-right.

1996-2010 – the rise of One Nation and the Greens

This time period signifies a shift in the pattern of IMP success from ‘local notable’ independents towards minor party success, offering both increased fragmentation as well as signs of realignment. The beginning of the period coincides with the end of the Hawke-Keating ALP era and the start of the Howard LNP one, and is notable for the rapid-fire emergence of Pauline Hanson’s One Nation, a vehicle for right wing populism (see Leach, Stokes, and Ward 2000). The period ends with the general election breakthrough of the Greens’ Adam Bandt into the federal House of Representatives, a minor party typically positioned to the left of the ALP (Charnock 2009). In addition to electing Bandt and former Greens candidate-turned independent Andrew Wilkie in Dennison, the 2010 election was also notable for producing the first federal hung parliament in Australia since 1940. Bandt and Wilkie, along with fellow IMPs Rob Oakeshott and Tony Windsor, supported the ALP to form a minority government.

The most significant feature of this period, and indeed of the dataset in general, is found in Queensland. Nineteen IMPs were elected in Queensland (to either state or federal parliament) during this period, 36 per cent of the total of 53 elected across the country between these years. Significantly, 14 out of these 19 Queensland MPs were pre-selected by a single minor party – One Nation. This rises to 15 if we include One Nation founder Pauline Hanson, who was initially elected as an independent during the 1996 federal election, having started the campaign as an LNP candidate before she was endorsed prior to polling day.

Interestingly, none of the 17 IMPs in Queensland Parliament in this period are defectors from either major party. The rise of One Nation as a vehicle for right-wing populism

has been observed as an anti-political reaction to John Howard's LNP government fundamentally changing Australia's firearms laws following a gun massacre at Port Arthur in Tasmania in 1996 (Leach, Stokes, and Ward 2000). Indeed, the LNP is the biggest loser in this period, suffering from both the split of the nationalist right vote away from both major parties, towards minor parties like One Nation, along with the majority of defections in this period, 8 out of the total 13.

Generally, it is minor party preselection and major party defection which emerge as the significant political mechanisms supporting the election of IMPs during this period. Whereas 44 per cent of IMPs elected during 1970–1995 had represented a community at a lower level of government (11 out of 25), between 1996 and 2010 this dropped to 32 per cent, although the absolute number continued to rise (17 out of 53). Contrastingly, the proportion of defections rose from 16 to 25 per cent (13 IMPs) while minor party preselection rose from 16 to 34 per cent (18 IMPs).

In terms of defections, a substantial proportion (around 20 per cent) of successful IMP candidates initially entered parliament with a major party endorsement, with the majority (13 out of 24) occurring between 1996 and 2010. Such defections potentially reflect a specific form of fragmentation, with candidates who once identified with the existing major parties increasingly finding themselves at odds with their party's values.

While this finding may suggest the categorisation of this era as 'the rise of the minor parties', following the dominance of pure independents in the previous three decades, there is little party strength or longevity in One Nation's QLD results. Within a year of their election as a One Nation MP, most of these 14 individuals had resigned from One Nation and had either formed new minor parties or were sitting as independents. One Nation barely features in the final period of our analysis.

2011-2023 – increasing party-like behaviour

The period since 2011 has seen a plateauing of the number of successful IMPs, 46 compared to 53 between 1996 and 2010, though still a steady increase overall. The peak is between 2016 and 2020, in which 19 of the total 46 IMPs in this period were elected (41 per cent). This confirms the suggestion that the 2022 federal election was part of a broader trend across the country rather than an outlier event. Politically, this period begins federally after the formation of the minority Gillard ALP government and ends with the slim majority of the Albanese ALP government, the centre-left governments bookending the Abbott, Turnbull, and Morrison LNP governments. The steady increase of successful IMPs across this period coincides with declining primary votes for both major parties as well as declining public trust in Australian politics (Cameron et al. 2022).

One dominant theme through this period is the increase in IMP success via party-like support. This factor increased generally across the dataset (Table 2), particularly so since 2011. The 'Teal' independents of the 2022 federal election, who received institutional support from Climate200, were the most notable of these (5 out of the total 10), whereas the other five IMPs elected in this way, with the exception of Cathy McGowan in Indi in the 2013 federal election, received explicit endorsement by the previous independent MP, and presumably benefited from political infrastructure such as contact lists of campaign volunteers and donors. Notably, since 2011 all of the successful IMPs receiving party-like support have won seats from the LNP – with the exception of

Alex Greenwich (Sydney NSW state) and Helen Haines (Indi VIC federal) who, as noted previously, received endorsements and resources from the previous independent incumbents (Clover Moore and Cathy McGowan respectively). Comparatively, the effect of minor party preselection in the same period is more balanced. The LNP and ALP each lost ten seats to minor parties, with one Greens IMP (Kobi Shetty) taking over from another (Jamie Parker) in the NSW state seat of Balmain, and the Greens' Jenny Leong winning the newly created adjacent NSW state seat of Newtown in 2015, which had a notional Greens majority.

The other notable feature of this period is the number of IMP candidates successfully elected having trailed another candidate in the initial primary vote, then overtaking them on preferences once other candidates were removed from the count. Table 3, which displays the significance of electoral institutions for successful IMP candidates, reveals a steady increase in IMP success via overtaking on preferences, from 41 per cent in 1970–1995 (10/24) up to 65 per cent between 2011 and 2023 (30 out of 46). In comparison, the number of IMP candidates elected against no incumbent, whether through a general election or by-election, remains relatively stable between 1970 and 2023.

Generally, this analysis reveals the importance of incumbency in single member electorates as well as preferential voting for IMP success. Over the time period, over half of IMP MPs were elected in the absence of an incumbent competitor, and over half won after overtaking another candidate on preferences (53 per cent or 66 of the total 124 in both instances) – noting it is possible to benefit from both factors simultaneously. Overall, 87 per cent of IMP MPs elected since 1970 were elected with one of these two major accompanying electoral factors.

In terms of defection, 4 IMPs were elected after defecting from a major party between 1970 and 1995, with 13 between 1998 and 2009 and 7 between 2010 and 2023. The comparative spike between 1996 and 2009 is perhaps sensitive to the boundary year, with the shift in government from the ALP to the LNP in the 1996 federal election.

Minor party success in this period is led by the Greens and One Nation (17 and 13 MPs respectively) followed by the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party and Katter's Australia Party, each with 3 MPs elected. Whether an IMP candidate had previously represented the community at a lower level of government or defected from a major party were certainly factors, but less significantly so over time.

From fragmentation to realignment

Finally, we examine the impacts of IMP success on the two major parties, and suggest potential mechanisms through which realignment is occurring. Overall, across the time periods, more IMP candidates enjoyed endorsements from minor parties and party-like groups than benefited from defection or previous election at a lower level of government. In contrast to those pathways, endorsement from non-major party actors has grown over time. Only 8 of 25 (32 per cent) of successful candidates gained such endorsements in our first period compared to 32 of 49 (65 per cent) in the last. Where the fragmentation thesis seems to capture the dynamics of the earliest period of our analysis, IMP success increasingly reflects forms of sustained organisation.

Further, [Table 4](#) outlines who IMPs defeated – whether ALP, LNP or another candidate – alongside which political mechanisms may have supported their election. Doing so reveals clear differences between IMP successes over the ALP and LNP. In general, the ALP have lost seats to minor parties, while LNP losses have come from a wider variety of sources – particularly independents, defectors and parties initiated by LNP defectors.

It is worth noting that our coding here is more complex than in our other cases. The party affiliation of the previous MP does not necessarily map directly onto the political orientation of voters in the electorate. An IMP candidate may have defeated a major party MP whose electorate typically votes another way, or their victory may signal a structural or demographic shift within the electorate. Despite this ambiguity, we have identified some clear patterns.

In general, IMP candidates have proven more troublesome for the LNP than the ALP. IMP candidates have won seats previously held by LNP members 70 times compared to 38 for Labor. The pattern of losses is also telling. The losses to minor party IMPs are relatively even for major parties. Indeed, the ALP has lost marginally more seats (19), than the LNP (18). In every other category LNP losses dominate.

LNP seats have proven more vulnerable to both IMPs rising up through lower levels of government and to defectors. The LNP has lost 17 seats to IMPs with experience at lower levels of government and lost 16 seats to defectors compared to the ALP losing only 6 in each category. Breaking down the losses to minor party candidates, a similar pattern emerges. The ALP's losses are primarily to the movement-based Greens (11 of 19), followed by One Nation (7) and Katter's Australia Party (1). In contrast, the LNP's losses are much more diverse, and dominated by losses to parties formed by LNP defectors. This includes 8 to former Liberal candidate Pauline Hanson's One Nation, 2 to former National MP-led Katter's Australia Party, and 1 each to the Liberals for Forests, the Liberal Movement and the Australian Democrats – all of which began as breakaways from the Liberals in South Australia. The LNP have also lost 5 seats to the Greens, 3 to the Shooters, Farmers and Fishers and 1 each to the Democratic Labor Party and the Nick Xenophon Team.

Considered instead by minor party grouping, Greens candidates were much more likely to win ALP seats, while Katter's Australia Party and the Shooters, Farmers and Fishers candidates were more likely to win LNP seats. One Nation candidates' victories were more diverse, with the minor party drawing votes and winning seats from both the ALP and the LNP (Leach, Stokes, and Ward 2000).

The different patterns of major party vulnerability to IMP success might suggest greater fragmentation of conservative politics, compared to a potential realignment of the political left. However, the LNP have also become more vulnerable to what might be termed a 'movement' of independents. Independent candidates who have received endorsements and resources from other IMPs, but are not members of a party, have won 9 seats from the LNP, including 8 supported by Climate200/Voices For groups, beginning with Cathy McGowan, who was selected and supported by a local group of community activists to contest (and eventually win) the 2013 federal election against LNP frontbench MP Sophie Mirabella (Hendriks 2017). The final example, Susan Davies, won the Victorian state seat of Gippsland West from the LNP in a 1997 by-election, after previously standing as a Labor candidate. Six endorsed independents also successfully retained seats previously held by independents once they retired, such as Helen

Haines succeeding Cathy McGowan in 2019 or Alex Greenwich succeeding Clover Moore in 2012. To date, the ALP has not lost to an endorsed independent candidate. These victories also appear more durable, pointing to a pattern more consistent with realignment, if somewhat distinct from the dynamics developing on the political left.

Concluding discussion

Our analysis set out to explore the election of growing numbers of independent and minor party (IMP) candidates elected to Australian single member districts. Since the Second World War, Australian parliaments have been dominated by two stable major party blocs. While minor parties have played a key role in proportional upper houses for much longer, majoritarianism has continued to dominate Australia's lower houses. The role of these houses in forming government potentially pushes voters towards binary partisan allegiances and single member districts create barriers for minor parties to gain representation. However, the two-party system has increasingly been under strain. Fewer and fewer Australians are voting for major parties, creating new spaces for IMP candidates. In our analysis of a novel dataset of 124 independent and minor party MPs elected in Australia since 1970 we asked: how are these IMP candidates winning elections? And at whose expense?

Overall, our findings suggest a gradual shift from reliance on existing pathways within the old two-party model to new forms of organisation. We observe a shift in the pathways taken by successful candidates, from those more closely associated with fragmentation, such as defection and localism, to those reflecting more sustained organisation, particularly endorsement by minor parties or party-like entities. Generally, between 1970 and 1995, just under 50 per cent of IMP MPs were elected with the support of previous representation at a lower level of government or defection from a major party, compared to 15 per cent selected by an organised minor party or party-like group. By the 2010–2023 period, these proportions had shifted to 27 per cent and 65 per cent respectively, signifying a reversal in the dominant political institutions supporting the election of IMP MPs over a 53-year period.

Our results clearly offer support for both fragmentation and realignment. We have identified growing numbers of independent MPs across multiple jurisdictions. Growing numbers of minor party affiliated MPs reflect a degree of fragmentation, with four parties gaining at least three seats across our data set, and a number of others coming and going over time. However, our findings also suggest the emergence of a more enduring realignment of representation. Independent MPs, it appears, are not randomly distributed – they are much more likely to gain seats at the expense of conservatives. Independents are also becoming more organised over time, enjoying the support or endorsement of existing MPs or broader party-like mechanisms.

Similar patterns of fragmentation alongside realignment are evident among successful minor party candidates. Most minor parties have either struggled to win more than one seat or have struggled to consolidate their gains. Two of the four parties that have won multiple single-member victories – One Nation and the Shooters, Farmers and Fishers – have subsequently lost most of their members to defection (usually to become independents). The diversity and instability of these party efforts is consistent with either the rise of short-course local factors over broader partisanship, or unstable protest voting. The

exception is the Greens, whose parliamentary numbers have slowly grown, largely through their ability to retain seats once won. Of the Greens MPs elected to lower houses at general elections, none have yet been defeated, and the one Greens IMP who retired, Jamie Parker, was replaced by another Greens MP.

Both growing organisation and endorsement amongst independents and the Greens' success are less reflective of fragmentation or the decline of ideology than they are of a potential realignment. This conclusion is reinforced by our final research finding. Not only do the independent and Greens representatives look more organised and stable, their victories also reflect partisan patterns. The Greens are more likely to win seats previously held by the ALP, and independents are more likely to win from the LNP. There are exceptions to both, but the patterns are clear.

The Greens' success in more progressive electorates is unsurprising. The Greens have long presented themselves and have been understood by electors to occupy a position to the left of the ALP (Charnock 2009). Our findings with respect to independents are more surprising. One might assume independents to be the most ideologically diverse, given they do not ascribe to any common policy platform or political identity. Instead, we suggest the dominance of independent success in conservative seats potentially reflects a more coherent set of values associated with independent politics. Rather than signalling ideological diversity, successful independents may instead appeal to a commonly understood position in the political centre.

We speculate the small 'I' liberal values of the 'Teals' may reflect a broader set of 'independent' values, which emphasise independence from strong partisan attachments and a commitment to judge issues by evidence rather than advocate for particular social groups. In this sense, 'independent' may not be the opposite of party affiliation, but rather a different form of affiliation, one more consistent with the pre-mass party era, where individual MPs were understood to exercise a greater degree of political judgement. The Liberal Party entrenched a similar principle in its constitution to differentiate itself from Labor's strong caucusing rules, and to position itself as 'liberal' rather than 'conservative'. However, more recently, LNP MPs have displayed an ALP-like degree of party discipline.

We conclude by noting limitations and broader implications. We do not systematically consider the platforms, longevity, organisation within parliament or constituencies of IMPs. Assessing the reorganisation of parliamentary politics clearly requires a broader canvas. Similarly, there are distinctively Australian features to our story. Preferential and compulsory voting are both relatively unique, as is Australia's combination of proportional and majoritarian electoral systems. Our findings suggest these unique electoral features play an important role in explaining the relative success of IMPs in Australia compared to similar jurisdictions.

Even so, we suggest our findings also have broader implications. Fragmentation and realignment are features of politics internationally. It may be that Australia's relatively more responsive electoral institutions have been more sensitive to shifting voter preferences than our Anglophone counterparts, reducing the degree of 'anti-politics' and facilitating a gradual pluralisation of parliamentary representation. Of course, a key test of a more plural realignment within lower houses is government formation. To date, IMPs have played a limited role in Australian cabinets. This would remain unsurprising if the rise of IMPs were simply the result of fragmentation. Instead, our findings of a steadier rise of organised IMP representation suggest the potential for a broader

reorganisation of political contests, as occurred with the early fusion of non-Labor parties and the enduring LNP coalition. Predicting or navigating such a transition is subject to significant uncertainties. We offer no such prediction, but rather speculation that more interesting times may be approaching.

Note

1. The Tasmanian Greens *informally* supported the minority Rundle Liberal Government from 1996–1998.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Notes on contributors

Mark Riboldi is a lecturer in social impact and social change at the UTS Business School, University of Technology Sydney. He used to like to party but aged out and became an academic instead.

Ben Spies-Butcher teaches Economy and Society in the Macquarie School of Social Sciences. He is co-director of the Australian Basic Income Lab, a collaboration between the Macquarie School of Social Sciences, the School of Social and Political Science at Sydney University and the Crawford School at ANU.

Phoebe Hayman is a PhD candidate in Politics, Philosophy and Media at La Trobe University, researching election campaigns, community organising and campaign organisation. Her doctoral thesis examines the 2022 independent campaigns as a case study of shifting forms of political participation.

ORCID

Mark Riboldi  <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-8241-604X>

Ben Spies-Butcher  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-0427-5082>

Phoebe Hayman  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-9282-9398>

References

- Alford, Robert R. 1963. "The Role of Social Class in American Voting Behavior." *Western Political Quarterly* 16 (1): 180–194. <https://doi.org/10.1177/106591296301600113>.
- Aroney, Nicholas, and Campbell Sharman. 2018. "Territorial Politics and the Federal Frame in Australia." In *Handbook of Territorial Politics*, edited by Klaus Detterbeck, and Eve Hepburn, 388–400. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited.
- Bélanger, Éric. 2004. "Antipartyism and Third-Party Vote Choice: A Comparison of Canada, Britain, and Australia." *Comparative Political Studies* 37 (9): 1054–1078. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414004268847>.
- Bolleyer, Nicole, and Liam Weeks. 2009. "The Puzzle of Non-Party Actors in Party Democracy: Independents in Ireland." *Comparative European Politics* 7 (3): 299–324. <https://doi.org/10.1057/cep.2008.21>.
- Brancati, Dawn. 2008. "Winning Alone: The Electoral Fate of Independent Candidates Worldwide." *The Journal of Politics* 70 (3): 648–662. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022381608080675>.

- Brown, Adam R. 2011. "Wikipedia as a Data Source for Political Scientists: Accuracy and Completeness of Coverage." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 44 (2): 339–343. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096511000199>.
- Browne, Bill, and Richard Denniss. 2024. "Rise of Minor Parties and Independents Upends Old Predictive Models; Demands Power Sharing Rethink." Canberra, Australia Institute. <https://australiainstitute.org.au/post/rise-of-minor-parties-and-independents-upends-old-predictive-models-demands-power-sharing-rethink/>.
- Cameron, Sarah, Ian McAllister, Simon Jackman, and Jill Sheppard. 2022. "The 2022 Australian Federal Election: Results from the Australian Election Study." Australian Election Study. Canberra: ANU.
- Charnock, David. 1997. "Class and Voting in the 1996 Australian Federal Election." *Electoral Studies* 16 (3): 281–300.
- Charnock, David. 2009. "Can the Australian Greens Replace the Australian Democrats as a 'Third Party' in the Senate?" *Australian Journal of Political Science* 44 (2): 245–258.
- Copus, Colin, Alistair Clark, Herwig Reynaert, and Kristof Steyvers. 2008. "Minor Party and Independent Politics Beyond the Mainstream: Fluctuating Fortunes but a Permanent Presence." *Parliamentary Affairs* 62 (1): 4–18. <https://doi.org/10.1093/pa/gsn035>.
- Curtin, Jennifer. 2004. "The Voice and Vote of the Bush: The Representation of Rural and Regional Australia in the Federal Parliament." Australian Parliamentary Fellow Monograph. Canberra: Department of Parliamentary Services Parliamentary Library.
- Curtin, Jennifer. 2005. "Getting Elected as an Independent: Electoral Laws and Party Favouritism." *Democratic Audit of Australia* May. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/268342195_Getting_elected_as_an_Independent_Electoral_laws_and_party_favouritism.
- Dalton, Russell. 2000. *Parties Without Partisans: Political Change in Advanced Industrial Democracies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dassonneville, Ruth, André Blais, and Yves Dejaeghere. 2015. "Staying With the Party, Switching or Exiting? A Comparative Analysis of Determinants of Party Switching and Abstaining." *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties* 25 (3): 387–405. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17457289.2015.1016528>.
- Farrell, David, and Ian McAllister. 2006. *The Australian Electoral System: Origins, Variations and Consequences*. Sydney: University of New South Wales Press.
- Gauja, Anika. 2015. "The State of Democracy and Representation in Australia." *Representation* 51 (1): 23–34. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00344893.2015.1023098>.
- Gauja, Anika. 2016. *Political Parties and Elections: Legislating for Representative Democracy*. New York: Routledge.
- Ghazarian, Zareh. 2012. "The Changing Type of Minor Party Elected to Parliament: The Case of the Australian Senate from 1949 to 2010." *Australian Journal of Political Science* 47 (3): 441–454. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10361146.2012.704007>.
- Godbout, Jean-Francois, and Monika Smaz. 2016. "Party Development in the Early Decades of the Australian Parliament: A New Perspective." *Australian Journal of Political Science* 51 (3): 478–495.
- Green, Antony. 2010. "Preferential voting in Australia", *ABC News*, May 12. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2010-05-12/preferential-voting-in-australia/9389472>.
- Hendriks, Carolyn M. 2017. "Citizen-Led Democratic Reform: Innovations in Indi." *Australian Journal of Political Science* 52 (4): 481–499. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10361146.2017.1374345>.
- Hendriks, Carolyn, and Richard Reid. 2023. "Citizen-Led Democratic Change: How Australia's Community Independents Movement Is Reshaping Representative Democracy." *Political Studies*, 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00323217231219393>.
- Holmes à Court, Simon. 2022. *The Big Teal*. Clayton: Monash University Publishing.
- Humphrys, Elizabeth, Simon Copland, and Luke Mansillo. 2020. "Anti-politics in Australia: Hypotheses, Evidence and Trends." *Journal of Australian Political Economy* 86:122–156.
- Jaensch, Dean, and David Mathieson. 1998. *A Plague on Both Your Houses: Minor Parties in Australia*. St Leonards: Allen & Unwin.

- Jones, F. L., and Ian McAllister. 1989. "The Changing Structural Base of Australian Politics Since 1946." *Politics* 24 (1): 7–17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00323268908402073>.
- Leach, M., G. Stokes, and I. Ward. (eds). 2000. *The Rise and Fall of One Nation*. Brisbane.: University of Queensland Press.
- Leigh, Andrew. 2006. "How do Unionists Vote? Estimating the Causal Impact of Union Membership on Voting Behaviour from 1966 to 2004." *Australian Journal of Political Science* 41 (4): 537–552.
- Mair, Peter. 2013. *Ruling the Void: The Hollowing of Western Democracy*. London: Verso.
- McAllister, Ian. 2011. *The Australian Voter: Fifty Years of Change*. Sydney: UNSW Press.
- McAllister, Ian. 2023. "Party Explanations for the 2022 Australian Election Result." *Australian Journal of Political Science* 58 (4): 309–325. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10361146.2023.2257611>.
- Mershon, Carol. 2014. "Legislative Party Switching." In *The Oxford Handbook of Legislative Studies*, edited by Shane Martin, Thomas Saalfeld, and Kaare Strøm, 418–435. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Miragliotta, Narelle. 2012. "Federalism, Party Organization and the Australian Greens." *Australian Journal Political History* 58 (1): 97–111. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8497.2012.01626.x>.
- Miragliotta, Narelle Lucia, and Campbell Sharman. 2012. "Federalism and New Party Insurgency in Australia." *Regional & Federal Studies* 22 (5): 577–594. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13597566.2012.733943>.
- Miskin, Sarah. 2003. "Politician Overboard: Jumping the Party Ship." Information and Research Services Research Paper 4(2002-03). Canberra: Department of the Parliamentary Library. <https://apo.org.au/sites/default/files/resource-files/2003-04/apo-nid7189.pdf>.
- Monro, Dugald. 2019. "Populism? Minor Parties and Independents in the Australian Federal Parliament, 1945–2016." *Policy Studies* 40 (2): 225–240. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01442872.2019.1581157>.
- Nethery, Amy. 2022. "'If Not Now, When? If Not Us, Who?' The Teals' No-Nonsense Blow to the Two-Party System." *Social Alternatives* 41 (4): 12–18.
- Nielsen, Sigge Winther, and Martin Vinæs Larsen. 2014. "Party Brands and Voting." *Electoral Studies* 33:153–165. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2013.08.001>.
- Raue, Ben. 2022. "The Declining Major Party Vote." *The Tally Room*, <https://www.tallyroom.com.au/47443>.
- Rodrigues, Mark, and Scott Brenton. 2010. "The Age of Independence? Independents in Australian Parliaments." *Australasian Parliamentary Review* 25 (1): 109–135. <https://doi.org/10.3316/ielapa.201213972>.
- Sanders, Will. 2020. "Comparing Northern Territory Elections, 1974–2016: Independent Success in a Strong Two-Party System." *Australian Journal of Politics & History* 66 (4): 596–612. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajph.12706>.
- Semenova, Elena, and Keith Dowding. 2023. "Patterns of Political Career Movements in Multi-Level Systems: A Cross-National Comparison of Twenty-Seven Countries." *Regional & Federal Studies*: 1–32. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13597566.2023.2269859>.
- Sharman, Campbell. 2002. "Politics at the Margin: Independents and the Australian Political System." *Papers on Parliament* 39. https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Senate/Powers_practice_n_procedures/pops/pop39/sharman.
- Sharman, Campbell. 2013. "Limiting Party Representation: Evidence from a Small Parliamentary Chamber." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 38 (3): 327–348. <https://doi.org/10.1111/lsq.12017>.
- Singleton, Gwyneth. 1996. "Independents in a Multi-Party System: The Experience of the Australian Senate." *Papers on Parliament* 28. https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Senate/Powers_practice_n_procedures/pops/pop28/c05.
- Stolz, Klaus. 2003. "Moving up, Moving Down: Political Careers Across Territorial Levels." *European Journal of Political Research* 42:223–248.
- Weeks, Liam. 2009. "We Don't Like (to) Party. A Typology of Independents in Irish Political Life, 1922–2007." *Irish Political Studies* 24 (1): 1–27. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07907180802551068>.
- Weeks, Liam. 2014. "Crashing the Party. Does STV Help Independents?" *Party Politics* 20 (4): 604–616. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068811436063>.