



MUSEUM
OF AUSTRALIAN
DEMOCRACY
OLD PARLIAMENT HOUSE

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Electorate of Niddrie and Gorton top the rates of informal votes at elections

A review of voting behaviour in Melbourne suburbs for the Federal and State Elections last found informal voting has reached worrying proportions – almost 10 per cent in some electorates.

Topping the list in the State Election, 8.31 per cent of voters in the Niddrie electorate cast an informal vote and in the Federal Election, nearly seven per cent of the Gorton electorate submitted an informal vote.

Informal votes constitute invalid votes that have been recorded but not counted towards the final result. They include ballot papers that are not marked at all, identify the voter or have not been marked correctly.

The number of voters who made it to the polls for each of these electorates was 93.63% for Niddrie and 92.4% for Gorton.

Recent research by the Museum of Australian Democracy (MOAD) has shown that one in five Australians have admitted to submitting a donkey vote or refusing to vote at an election. Astonishingly, one in ten also say that they would sell their vote in an election.

“Voting is one of the staple rights that we have in a democratic society. It is surprising to see that there are a number of Australians who are not having their say,” said Andrew Harper, Acting Director from the Museum of Australian Democracy.

“While some of these numbers on their own are small, when you combine voter turnout, with the number of informal votes, the number of people who are not registered and those that choose to submit a donkey vote, you find that you could have around a quarter of the voting population not having their say.”

Statistics from the 2007 election show that 92.7% of those eligible to vote were on the register at the time of the election.

On the flipside, the most diligent voters across Victoria for the State Election included the Hawthorn electorate and in the Federal Election, the Kooyong electorate cast the highest number of counted votes.

“Australia can celebrate and be proud of its democratic freedoms but should also ensure these freedoms continue well into the future. We encourage all Australians to embrace democracy at a conscious level so that they can each play a role in shaping a positive future,” Harper said.

“From our own personal values, to the way we interact with our family and our local community, down to the choices we are free to make, these are all freedoms we enjoy in a democracy.”

“Democracy is as important today as it has ever been.”

“There are still many issues that are still current in Australia and plenty of opportunities for members of the community to have their say on issues both at the community and the national level,” Harper said.

Australians have a chance to Have Their Say

The Museum of Australian Democracy will be holding a Have Your Say Day on Wednesday 10 August as a day when it will be encouraging all Australians to have their say and participate in democracy.

“A number of Australians complain that they don’t have time to think about, or participate in democracy. So the museum is creating the time through Have Your Say Day,” said Harper.

“We are encouraging everyone to use this day as a central point to talk about the issues that matter most in their lives. There are many ways that people can get involved, from speaking to friends, participating online or writing to their local representatives.”

More information on Have Your Say Day can be found on www.ourfreedom.com.au and by following #moadhaveyoursayday

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Research highlights:

2010 State Election

Top 5 electorates casting informal votes in Victoria

State Electorate	Turnout	%	Informal	%
Niddrie	31 597	93.63	2865	8.31
Thomastown	34 025	92.33	2716	7.98
Kororoit	35 636	91	3076	7.95
Derrimut	34 267	91	2906	7.82
Broadmeadows	33 222	88.77	2517	7.58

Top 5 electorates in Victoria with least number of informal votes

State Electorate	Turnout	%	Informal	%
Hawthorn	35 593	91.85	1047	2.94
Box Hill	36 166	92.98	1155	3.19
Prahran	34 904	88.91	1128	3.23
Burwood	36 425	93.51	1215	3.34
Kew	34 228	92.75	1145	3.35

2010 Federal Election

Top 5 electorates casting informal votes in Victoria

Federal Electorate	Turnout	%	Informal	%
Gorton	105 033	92.4	7048	6.71
Calwell	93 668	92.43	6114	6.53
Lalor	110 052	94.08	6864	6.24
Scullin	84 435	92.98	5055	5.99
Maribyrnong	81 179	91.82	4607	5.68

Top 5 electorates in Victoria with least number of informal votes

Federal Electorate	Turnout	%	Informal	%
Kooyong	83 613	93.29	2 326	2.78
Higgins	83 690	92.57	2 343	2.8
Goldstein	87 293	92.95	2 735	3.13
Melbourne Ports	87 669	89.67	2 848	3.25
Deakin	82 967	94.59	2 967	3.58

For more information and interview opportunities contact: David Micallef, Fenton Communications, david@fenton.com.au , 03 9600 0006, 0431 635 568

Interview opportunities are available with:

Editors notes:

- Election figures are from the Australian Electoral Commission for the 2010 Federal election and the 2010 Victorian state election
- MOAD survey was conducted with 1,011 participants in July 2011
- A fact sheet on Have Your Say Day is also available
- Please note that the ourfreedom.com.au website will only be live from 1 August 2011