

Deliberation and Referendum Voting*

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All around the globe, democracies have been deciding more and more policy and constitutional issues by referendum. The impulse is democratic. But the premise—that more direct democracy is more or better democracy—is questionable. Referenda present voters with more complex, less easily navigable decisions than elections for office, and what we make of this trend, and of the relative merits of referendum versus representative democracy, depends partly on the degree to which referendum voters can be expected to vote sensibly—in keeping with their own values and interests. That in turn depends, as we shall argue, on their level of political information.¹

It was never really tenable, nor is it still widely maintained, that most people know very much about politics, compared to the elites who practice, analyze, and report on it. The question could only be debated so long as the evidence rested heavily on highly inferential measures, based on either the use of “ideological abstractions” like “left” or “right” or the consistency qua covariance of policy attitudes.² A turn toward more direct measurement, based on the pieces of salient political information that people actually do—or, more often, do not—possess has finally settled the issue (Kinder 1998, Price 1999, Luskin 2002a). The strength of the current consensus is illustrated by the career of Norman Nie, who once argued prominently that American public suddenly became well informed during the 1960s (Nie, Verba, and Petrocik 1976) but has more recently been examining, also prominently, the question of why the American public’s level of political information has *not* increased since well before that (Nie, Junn, and Stehlik-Barry 1996).

Implausibly sunny interpretations of voters’ decision-making persist, but from a fallback position. With the fact of widespread public ignorance now firmly established, there has been a shift from “denial” to “extenuation” (Luskin 2002a). Now the claim is that by combining “heuristics” with simple cues, most people manage to arrive at the same preferences they would hold with “full information” (Popkin xxxx; Lupia xxxx, xxxx; Lupia and McCubbins 1998). They may be ignorant, but their votes and views would not be appreciably different if they knew much more.³

The most prominent recent literature on referendum voting is very much in this vein. People are said to vote sensibly enough (Bowler and Donovan 1998), even in keeping with their “full information” preferences (Lupia xxxx, xxxx; Lupia and McCubbins 1998). Yet there is reason to distrust these assurances. Impressionistically, referenda sometimes turn out the way they do because large numbers of voters have been seriously misled (Sartori xxxx). This seems to have been the case in a Swiss referendum on nuclear energy (Gruner and Hertig 1983) and a Los Angeles referendum on rent control (Magleby 1995), for example.

The evidence from party and candidate elections is also instructive. Both statistical simulations (Bartels 1996, Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996, Luskin and Globetti 1998) and quasi-experimental manipulations (Luskin, Fishkin, Jowell, and Park 1999) suggest that significant minorities of voters would vote differently with fuller information, and that the net change in the distribution of votes would in many cases be enough to flip the outcome. If this happens even in partisan elections, where voters have had some experience of incumbents’ performance in office and have party labels as signposts, it should happen still more in referenda.

This paper examines the Australian Constitutional Referendum of November 6, 1999, using data from a Deliberative Poll conducted two weeks earlier and the Australian Constitutional Referendum Study conducted by the Australian Election Study, which contained many of the same questions. These data allow an unusually direct look at the question of whether people's votes would have changed if they had known more about the issues.

The Referendum⁴

The referendum asked Australians to vote Yes or No on a constitutional amendment to make Australia a republic, cut its remaining constitutional ties to the British Crown, and replace the Queen and governor-general with a president chosen by Parliament.⁵ The president was intended to have roughly the same, largely ceremonial role as the governor-general. Accompanying legislation spelled out the details, including that the president would be nominated by the prime minister, seconded by the leader of the opposition, and approved by two-thirds of the bicameral Parliament sitting as one body⁶ and could be removed by the prime minister, subject to after-the-fact ratification within 30 days, by a majority of the House of Representatives.⁷ The president would inherit the uncodified "reserve powers" by which the Crown and governor-general can dismiss a prime minister, grant or refuse parliament's dissolution, and issue election writs.

The referendum stemmed in large measure from agitation, over the preceding decade, by the Australian Republican Movement (ARM), formed to work toward "a Head of State who is an Australian citizen, who is appointed by Australians and who represents the independent and sovereign nation of Australia." The ARM urged a minimal presidency on the lines of the eventual referendum proposal, fearing that a directly elected and possibly stronger presidency would be too radical and too complicated a change.⁸ The opposing case was argued most prominently by Australians for Constitutional Monarchy (ACM), formed soon after to "defend the Australian Constitution, the role of the Crown in it ... and resist its replacement with a republic." The ACM defended the status quo on the grounds that Australia was already a "crowned republic"; that the governor-general, an Australian, not the Queen, was actually head-of-state; and that it was foolish and possibly dangerous to tinker with a constitutional system that had served well for a hundred years.

The governing Liberal-National coalition and the opposition Labor party took visibly different positions. Labor Party leaders tended to favor the proposal, while the governing Liberal party was more evenly split, as to a lesser extent was its coalition partner National Party. The then and current Liberal prime minister, John Howard, personally opposed any change. Nevertheless, his government convened a people's constitutional convention to consider the issue in February, 1998. After two weeks of fractious, nationally televised debate, above all over the issue of whether the president in a republic should be parliamentarily appointed, as urged by the ARM, or directly elected, the "Con-Con" endorsed a republican model involving a parliamentarily appointed president.⁹ The result, after Howard was forced to retreat from an initial, less palatable version, was the referendum proposal described above.

The government appropriated \$20 million for educating voters about the issue. Five million dollars went to the Electoral Commission to send every voter a neutral information document about the referendum. The remaining \$15 million was divided equally between

officially constituted “Yes” and “No” committees, each consisting of ten prominent advocates. The No committee included two direct election republicans. The three-month campaign saw newspaper and television advertisements, talk-show discussions, TV debates, town meetings, and appeals by past prime ministers and governors-general, eminent jurists, and sports stars.

The Yes campaign described the proposed change as “small and safe,” sneered at the prospect of eventual rule by “King Charles III and Queen Camilla,” and cited the support of distinguished Australians. The No campaign railed against “Chardonnay-swilling elites” fomenting a republican plot, claimed that the referendum would create a “politicians’ republic,” and argued that “real democrats,” favoring a directly elected president, should vote No.¹⁰ Some extreme anti-republicans raised the specter of secession by states refusing to adopt republican governments, of Australia’s ouster from the Commonwealth, and even of the republic’s being like Weimar Germany waiting for Hitler.

In the end, the referendum was rejected by a margin of 55-45. It failed in all six states and the Northern Territory. Only the Capital Territory, containing Canberra, registered a majority in favor.¹¹ A very sizable portion of the No vote clearly came from direct-election republicans. Polls showed that fewer than 10 percent of those who voted No liked having the Queen as Australia’s head of state and that up to half of them, depending on how the question was worded, would have voted Yes if the proposal had been for a directly-elected president.

The Deliberative Poll

Deliberative Polling is an attempt to gauge the distribution of opinions and electoral preferences that would result if citizens had more information and thought more about the issues. Deliberation—defined, for present purposes, as informed, contemplative, respectful discussion—is employed as a means to that end. The idea, in very brief, is to recruit a standard, good quality random sample; measure the respondents’ opinions, preferences, and other characteristics; send them all carefully balanced briefing materials, laying out all the major arguments for and against all the major policy or electoral alternatives for one or more issues or elections; bring them all, or as many as agree to come, to a common site for a “deliberative weekend”; and then measure their opinions again at the end of the weekend. The weekend consists mainly of alternating small-group and plenary sessions, the former taken up with discussions led by trained moderators, the latter with samples’ questioning of panels of policy experts, politicians, or policy-makers. The small groups are randomly assigned. (See Fishkin xxxx; Fishkin and Luskin 1998, or Luskin, Fishkin, and Jowell 2002 for more detail.)¹²

The point of this manipulation is to provide both information and the occasion and incentive to consider it seriously. The information conveyed is not just narrowly factual. The briefing materials package information in arguments for or against given alternatives. The small group discussions reveal other peoples’ needs and perspectives. In all, we hope to advance the participants some modest distance toward “full information” in the broadest sense (and incidentally toward other citizenly virtues, like political efficacy, participation, and tolerance).¹³

In the present case, we had the commercial survey house Newspoll interview 1220 respondents, of whom 347 attended the deliberative weekend, October 22-24. The interviews

were by telephone, and the sampling by RDD with quotas for sex. The deliberations took place in Old Parliament House in Canberra. Other elements of the quasi-experimental design rested on the close collaboration between the ADP and the Australian Constitutional Referendum Study (ACRS) of the Australian Election Studies. All the ADP's original interviewees, both participants and nonparticipants, were mailed ACRS questionnaires to get their views just after the referendum, at the same time as the ACRS's own independent random sample. Since the ACRS questionnaire included most of the ADP questionnaire's items, the responses from the ADP participants constitute a third wave a measurement on the participants and a second wave on the nonparticipants. The latter constitute a before-after quasi-control group, while the ACRS respondents constitute a rather better "post-test only" quasi-control group. Ensuing reports will make more use of these additional data; here we advert to them only occasionally in passing.

Representativeness

Both scientifically and normatively, it is important to begin with a representative sample. Random sampling provides its usual probabilistic assurances regarding the *interview sample*, consisting of both *participants*, who attended the deliberative weekend, and *nonparticipants*, who were interviewed but did not attend. But the question of the representativeness of the participant sample, a self-selected subset, remains.

In the event, the participant sample was highly representative. The overall response rate (the number of participants divided by the number of designated interviewees) is comparable with those of the best commercial polls, honestly calculated (Brady and Orren 1993; King and xxxx, Krosnick?). Comparing the participants with the nonparticipants shows that the sociodemographic differences between them are almost entirely minor and of a piece with known biases in ordinary polls. The participants are somewhat better educated, older, more affluent, and more interested in and knowledgeable about the subject area than the nonparticipants. When it comes to beliefs and attitudes, moreover, the statistically significant differences are fewer and still smaller. (See Appendix A for details.)¹⁴ The participants were somewhat more inclined (57% versus 51%) to favor the referendum proposal, although the difference is not statistically significant.¹⁵

We stress the representativeness of the sample because few experiments or quasi-experiments have samples remotely as good, or indeed worth taking seriously at all. The same is true, in generally still greater degree of other deliberative fora, like Consensus Conferences, Citizens Juries, Planning Cells, National Issues Forums, and the Americans Discuss Social Security (ADSS) forums run by America Speaks. In most cases, these samples are entirely self-selected, even, in the ADSS case, packed by relevant interest groups. Matching a control sample to hopelessly unrepresentative participant sample (as in Barabas 2004) can rescue "internal validity" but does nothing to achieve external validity. The quasi control groups described above, coupled with random sampling only mildly eroded by self-selection, give the present data a high degree of external as well as internal validity.

Changes from Deliberation

Vote Intention

The net change in vote intention may be viewed in Table 1. The bottom line was a huge, 16 point increase in the Yes vote, from 57 to 73 percent. Among the ADP participants, the referendum would have carried easily. **[Add contrast to control groups.]**

Underlying Alternatives

The public's preferences were actually divided among three broad alternatives: a republic with a parliamentarily chosen president (the referendum proposal), a republic with a directly elected president, and the status quo. Before deliberation, direct election was by far the most popular option, the first choice of almost 51.5 percent of our participants. Those favoring direct election opposed the referendum proposal as too little of a good thing. By the end of the deliberative weekend, however, only 20.5 percent ranked direct election as their first choice, apparently because many participants came to believe that it would make the office and the selection process political. Thus many of those initially favoring direct election moved toward the referendum proposal as what they now saw as the best republican alternative. First-choice support for the status quo also declined, from 27.5 to 15.7%, and first-choice support for the referendum model increased from 21 to 64 percent. **[Add contrast to control groups.]**

Knowledge

The participants learned a lot. Between the initial interview and the end of the deliberative weekend, their "domain-specific" knowledge of the referendum proposal and the status quo increased dramatically, as can be seen in Table 2. At the beginning, our participants, like the citizenry as a whole, knew little about these matters. On average, only 39% got the five domain-specific knowledge items right, not so much more than the 27% who would have done so by blind guessing.¹⁶

By the end of the deliberative weekend, however, they knew a great deal more. The mean percentage getting these same five domain-specific items right rocketed to 70%. Sixty-one percent knew that "the governor general can decide whether or not to dismiss the government," 73 percent that under the referendum proposal, the prime minister "could remove the president at any time but must later obtain approval from the house of representatives," 85 percent that "the Queen appoints the governor general only on the advice of the prime minister," and fully 92 percent that the role of the president under the referendum proposal would be like that of the current governor general (rather than the prime minister, the American president, or the British prime minister).

Only the question about which party was more in favor of a republic showed any decrease, and that for understandable reasons. The panelists appearing before the ADP included Yes and No advocates within both Liberal and Labor parties, obscuring the difference in central tendency between them. The percentage answering this party location item correctly decreased from 47 to 40%. That one item aside, the percentages getting these items right increased by an average of 40.5%. The percentage knowing about the prime minister's ability to remove the president under the proposed republic increased by 57%.

“General” knowledge of politics more broadly also increased, if much more modestly. On average the percentage knowing that Jennie George is the president of the ACTU/leader of the Australian workers' union, that Aden Ridgeway is an aboriginal senator in parliament, that the Liberal party “is closer [than the Labor party] to business,” and that the Labor party “is more concerned [than the Liberal party] about social and welfare issues” increased by 6%. From the standpoint of the referendum debate, these items represented incidental, background knowledge. Neither the briefing materials nor the discussions directly concerned them. Yet the participants learned something about them anyway.

With only one exception, both referendum and general political knowledge increased further during the several weeks between the deliberative weekend and the ACRS survey. The percentage knowing that under the referendum proposal, the prime minister “could remove the president at any time but must later obtain approval from the house of representatives” increased further from 73 to 81 percent. Most strikingly, the percentage knowing that the Labor party was more in favor of a republic than the Liberal party, which had slipped from 47 to 40 percent, shot up to 65 percent. Doubtless this increase stemmed partly from Howard's publicly opposing the referendum proposal during the last two weeks of the campaign, i.e. after the deliberative weekend, but we suspect that it also occurred because the ADP participants were by that point very actively looking for answers to the factual questions they thought they might have missed, as their further gains on the other knowledge items suggests.

More Basic Dispositions

An assortment of more basic dispositions should affect vote intention. Some are values or identifications. Respondents were asked to say how much they agreed that “Australia's British heritage is very important to you” (gauging British identity), that “it is important to preserve traditional ways of doing things” (gauging traditionalism), and that “it is important to do what the majority of Australians want, even when you think it's bad for the country” (gauging attachment to democracy). Other dispositions are less basic but still antecede vote intentions. Respondents were asked whether an Australian president should have greater, the same, or fewer powers than the current Governor General; whether the country should “keep rather than cut its remaining constitutional ties with Britain”; whether an Australian president should “be someone from outside of politics”; whether “our head of state should be an Australian;” and “whether the whole debate over becoming a republic is a distraction from Australia's real problems.”

These items exhibited some change. (See Table 1 again.) Support for obeying majorities, for having an Australian head of state, and, perhaps most significantly, for the

president's being from outside politics increased. Support for preserving traditional ways of doing things and for keeping the remaining constitutional ties to Britain declined, as did the perception of the referendum debate as mere distraction. Some of these changes, moreover, were quite large. Support for retaining the remaining constitutional ties with Britain declined. The percentage who believe the President should be non-political rose from 53 to 88 percent.

Empirical Premises

As we have already begun to suggest, much of the story of the very large increase in the Yes vote may have lain in the empirical premises underpinning the vote. Understandings of both the status quo and the nature and consequences of the referendum proposal changed considerably. (Again see Table 1.) The percentage considering that the monarchy represents British interests jumped from 64 to 84. The percentage believing that confrontations with the prime minister would become likelier under the referendum proposal decreased from 44 to 23. The percentage believing that parties would have a greater role in choosing an appointed than a directly elected president declined from 76 to 66.¹⁷ The percentage believing that the Australian flag would necessarily change dropped from 59 to 8.

On a generally smaller but still notable scale, the percentages believing that the president would be no more powerful than the governor general, that Australia could remain a member of the Commonwealth, that Australia would become a more independent country, that the states would be weakened, and that the use of the word "royal" in various official connection would have to cease increased. The percentages believing that there would be any change in Australia's participation in the Commonwealth games, that the national anthem would necessarily change, and that the change would be expensive decreased.

The thing to note about all these changes is that they generally favored the Yes position. The participants increasingly believed the Yes camp's description of the referendum proposal and disbelieved the No camp's.

Why the Shift to Yes?

Conformity and Convergence

One reasonable concern is that much change in preferences could result simply from conformity mechanisms. The mean opinion of each small group might be expected to shift toward the same side of the mid-point as it originally lies on. Predominantly pro-referendum small groups might be expected to become more pro-referendum, predominantly anti-referendum ones more anti-referendum. At the same time, the variance within each small group might be expected to shrink

The second pattern does obtain: a large majority of the small groups do show diminishing variance of opinion. (See Table 3.) That is partly, however, because so many people in all groups moved to the Yes position, and so few to the No position. That same across-the-board shift also limited the number of groups changing in the expected direction. On vote intention,

(Table 3 about here)

only 45.8% of the groups moved toward the same side as they were already on. On the trichotomous preference item, only 8.7% of the groups saw an increase in the frequency of what had been their model first choice category, and only 26.3% saw an increase in the frequency of what had been their first and second choice categories combined.

Social Location

Linear regressions of change in vote preference on sociodemographic variables, not shown, suggest that it is impossible to explain the observed changes of preference in terms of social location. The changes were not confined to this sort of person or that. A multinomial logit model, results also not shown, yields the same conclusion.

Information and Small Group Effects

What explains the changes in vote preference, then? Various models, from various perspectives, are possible, but one simple but telling one expresses the change in vote preference on just two variables: information gain (learning) and the time 1 difference between the individual's preference and the mean preference of his or her small group (excluding his or her own preference). Theoretically, the model is thus:

$$(1) \quad P_2 - P_1 = \gamma_0 + \gamma_1(I_2 - I_1) + \gamma_2(P_1 - G_1) + u,$$

where I , P , and G denote information and individual and mean group preference, their subscripts distinguish pre- and post-deliberation observations, the γ 's are parameters, and u is a disturbance. We expect that γ_1 has same sign as $\bar{P}_2 - \bar{P}_1$, so that the people who learn most change most, and that $\gamma_2 < 0$, meaning that people tend to narrow gap between where they are and where rest of their small group is. This is the model of Luskin, Fishkin, and Jowell (2002).

In practice, $I_2 - I_1$ is proxied by the observed I_2 , which under plausible assumptions is necessarily more highly correlated with the actual $I_2 - I_1$ than is the observed $I_2 - I_1$. Indeed the observed $I_2 - I_1$ may be negatively correlated with the actual $I_2 - I_1$. The core reason is this: everyone ending with high information is gaining information (high actual $I_2 - I_1$). Those who started low are gaining observably (high observed $I_2 - I_1$), but those who started high are gaining even more, albeit unobservably (low observed but high actual $I_2 - I_1$), given the combination of ceiling effects and the rich-get-richer nature of learning. For more of the reasoning and algebra, see Luskin (xxxx).¹⁸

In this case, P_1 and P_2 are 0-1 dichotomies, with 1 denoting an intended Yes vote. For simplicity, let us treat their difference ($= -1$ for change from Yes to No, 0 for no change, and 1 for change from No to Yes) as numerically meaningful and adopt the linear, additive model of (1). A more strictly appropriate specification, treating the dependent variable as merely ordinal and adopting an ordered probit model, yields similar results.¹⁹

Table 4 shows the OLS estimates of (1). As can be seen, both I_2 , proxying $I_2 - I_1$, and $P_1 - G_1$ have sizable and statistically significant effects, and of the right sign: the estimated γ_1 is positive (just as $\bar{P}_2 - \bar{P}_1$ is positive, with more participants shifting from No to Yes than vice

(Table 4 about here)

versa), and the estimated γ_2 is negative. Information moves participants in the same direction as the sample as a whole, toward a Yes vote. I.e., the overall movement toward Yes is heavily driven by those who learned the most.

But consider the small group effect more closely. Some of the negative relationship between $P_2 - P_1$ and $P_1 - G_1$ arises simply from the shared presence of P_1 (with opposite sign). So suppose we break up the small group variable, entering P_1 and G_1 separately:

$$(2) \quad P_2 - P_1 = \gamma_0 + \gamma_1(I_2 - I_1) + \gamma_2 P_1 + \gamma_3 G_1 + u$$

Now γ_3 should be positive to the extent that individual participants are tugged along by the opinions most common in their small groups, γ_2 should be negative on account of “regression toward the mean.” The lower tier of Table 4 shows that the individual’s own pre-deliberation position has a very strong if substantively uninteresting regression-toward-the-mean effect, that the small group mean has little effect (although its coefficient does have the expected positive sign), and—most importantly—that the individual’s post-deliberation knowledge, proxying, still has a sizable effect. The sample as whole became much more likely to vote yes, but that was especially true of those who learned the most.

Considerations Before and After

Discussion

In the real world, the Australian constitutional referendum went down to defeat. Fifty-five percent of the voters voted No. Only 45% voted Yes. From the extenuationist point of view, this must have been something very like the full-information outcome—how the voters would have voted if they all had known as much as the experts about the referendum proposal and the status quo. Indeed, it must have been even closer than usual to the full information outcome, given the great wealth of information readily available from the Yes and No Campaigns and the Electoral Commission, among other sources.

From the perspective of the Deliberative Poll, however, the voters got the referendum quite wrong. The AD participants gained a very great deal of information. They thought about the issue much harder than average. They discussed it much more, and with a much wider variety of their fellow citizens. And they voted resoundingly *for* the proposed republic.

What was the difference? It seems to have lain in a mix of changed values, changed perceptions, and the clearer reasoning from values and perceptions to votes that comes with increased knowledge. The participants both came increasingly to value having a president from outside politics and increasingly to see the direct election model as likely to produce presidents from within politics. They came both decreasingly to think that Australia should maintain its traditional ties with Britain and increasingly to think that the referendum proposal would boost Australia's independence. Etc. We shall soon begin more extended statistical modeling of just what went into the changes of preference, and to what degree.

Of course this is just one referendum. There may be others in which fuller information would make no appreciable difference. Based on the results of statistical simulations for candidate and party elections and for policy preferences, however, we doubt they can be common. In any event, the Australian constitutional referendum is a very clear case of heuristics and simple cues' not being enough. One may take the precise 73-27% margin with some salt. Perhaps a different set of experts, of performances by the experts we had, or a different sample of voters would have produced a different outcome. Perhaps, but our experience with a series of eight regional Deliberative Polls about electric utility issues, which varied considerably in this sort of operational detail, suggests otherwise. Despite countless differences in the composition of expert panels, what questions the panelists were asked, what they said in response, the briefing materials, and of course the participant samples, the results came out remarkably similar across the series (Luskin, Fishkin, and Plane 1999). Thus while the margin might not have been 73-27, it does seem abundantly clear that the proposal to make Australia a republic would have passed, if the whole electorate had learned and thought more about the issue.

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Table 1
Net Changes in Policy Preferences, More Basic Predispositions, Empirical Premises, and Vote Intention

	Range	<i>Before DOP</i>	<i>After DOP</i>	
Referendum Approval				
Approve of proposed change	0-1	0.57	0.73	***
Preference				
President same powers as Gov. General	1-3	2.10	2.03	
Republic Opinion				
Keep ties with Britain	1-5	3.15	2.52	***
President someone outside of politics	1-5	3.49	4.54	***
Head of State Australian	1-5	4.79	4.88	*
Debate a distraction	1-5	3.13	2.56	***
Prospective Referendum Evaluation				
P.M. more powerful	1-5	2.43	2.78	***
Pres. no more powerful than Gov. Gen.	1-5	3.61	4.09	***
Change to a republic expensive	1-5	3.88	3.00	***
Remain member of Commonwealth	1-5	3.81	4.18	***
Political stability endangered	1-5	2.04	1.97	
Constitutional reform more difficult	1-5	2.32	2.22	
Become a more independent country	1-5	3.63	3.86	*
Standing in world improved	1-5	3.27	3.61	***
Confrontations with PM more likely	1-5	3.02	2.38	***
States weakened	1-5	2.25	2.22	
Government more democratic	1-5	2.91	3.29	***
President less likely a politician	1-5	2.36	3.91	***
Parties greater role in choosing president	1-5	4.05	3.69	***
Australian flag change	1-2	1.59	1.08	***
National anthem change	1-2	1.24	1.02	***
Change use of word 'royal'	1-2	1.69	1.86	***
Change participation in C'wealth Games	1-2	1.23	1.06	***
Current Government Evaluation				
Queen important in guaranteeing rights	1-5	2.09	1.99	
Queen promotes British interests	1-5	3.71	4.38	***
Attitudinal Variables				
Feeling toward monarchists	1-5	2.84	2.67	***
Feeling toward republicans	1-5	3.29	3.78	***
General Opinion				
British heritage important	1-5	3.55	3.44	
Preserve traditional ways	1-5	3.41	3.12	***
Do what majority wants	1-5	3.07	3.33	**

Note. These are the participants' mean scores before and after the Australian Deliberative Poll. All variables are scored so that higher numbers indicate greater agreement.

*Statistically significant at the .05 level (two-tailed test).

** Statistically significant at the .01 level (two-tailed test).

*** Statistically significant at the .001 level (two-tailed test).

Table 2
Knowledge Gains

Percentage of correct answers				
	Before DOP	<i>After DOP</i>	<i>Change</i>	
Referendum Knowledge				
Fact: President like Governor General	40%	92%	51%	***
Fact: P.M. remove president	16%	73%	57%	***
Fact: Queen appoints Governor General	39%	85%	46%	***
Fact: Governor General dismiss gov't	53%	61%	8%	*
Political Knowledge				
Fact: Labor pty more in favor of republic	47%	40%	-7%	*
Fact: Labor more concerned w/ welfare	42%	44%	2%	
Fact: Liberal pty closer to business	59%	64%	5%	
Fact: Aden Ridgeway	46%	58%	12%	***
Fact: Jennie George	63%	69%	6%	**
Summary Indexes				
Referendum knowledge	37%	78%	40%	***
Political knowledge	52%	55%	4%	**
Total knowledge	45%	65%	20%	***

*Statistically significant at the .05 level.

** Statistically significant at the .01 level.

*** Statistically significant at the .001 level.

Table 3
Changes in Small Group Vote Intentions and Preferences*

	Increase in modal category/categories¹	<i>Decrease in Variance/Entropy²</i>
Approve of proposed change	45.8	70.8
First option on changing republic	8.7	83.3
First option on changing republic	26.3	83.3

*All statistics are the percentage of small groups changing as indicated.

¹"Approve of proposed change" is a dichotomous variable and the statistic represents the percentage of small groups for which the percentage of respondents in the time 1 modal category increased at time 2. "First option on changing republic" is a trichotomous variable. The first line reports a statistic as with proposed change. The second line reports the percentage of small groups for which the percentage of respondents in the top two categories at time 1 increased at time 2.

²The relevant measure of dispersion is variance for the dichotomous variable and entropy for the trichotomous variable.

Table 4
Change in Vote Intention Information Gain and Distance from the Small Group Mean

A. With $P_1 - G_1$ as One Variable

Explanatory Variable	
Intercept	-0.100 (0.108)
t_2 Information (I_2)	0.338* (0.139)
t_1 Distance from Group Mean ($P_1 - G_1$)	-0.675* (0.139)
R^2	0.362
Adj R^2	0.358
F	83.735
Probability	0.000
n	298

B. With P_1 and G_1 as Separate Variables

Explanatory Variable	
Intercept	0.245 (0.141)
t_2 Information (I_2)	0.341* (0.136)
t_1 Preference (P_1)	-0.676* (0.051)
t_1 Group Mean (G_1)	0.066 (0.171)
R^2	0.391
Adj R^2	0.385
F	62.891
Probability	0.000
n	298

NOTE: Cell entries are coefficient estimates, with standard errors in parentheses.

* Significant at the .05 level (two-tailed).

Appendix A
Comparisons of Participants and Nonparticipants

A.1 Numerically Scored Items

	Range	<i>Participants</i>	<i>Nonparticipants</i>	
Sociodemographic Background				
Gender	1-2	1.48	1.52	
Age	18-88	45.7	45.6	
Employment status	1-3	2.24	2.08	**
Age of leaving school	1-10	6.43	6.25	*
Education level	1-5	3.37	3.10	***
Country of birth	1-2	1.75	1.84	*
Household income	1-6	3.92	3.46	***
Partisanship and Political Interest				
Strength of party support	1-3	1.99	1.97	
Interest in politics	1-4	3.24	2.92	***
Referendum Awareness				
Awareness of referendum	1-2	1.95	1.89	***
Read/heard about referendum	1-4	2.60	2.52	
Discussed referendum	1-4	2.04	1.85	**
Want more information on referendum	1-3	2.45	2.25	***
Voting Intention				
Approve of proposed change	1-2	1.57	1.51	
Approve of proposed change, with probe	1-2	1.57	1.52	
Approve of proposed change, 4-category	1-4	2.70	2.54	
Values				
Keep ties with Britain	1-5	3.15	3.22	
President someone outside of politics	1-5	3.49	3.61	
Head of State Australian	1-5	4.79	4.82	
Debate a distraction	1-5	3.13	3.47	***
Pres. greater powers than Gov. General	1-3	2.10	2.18	*
Empirical Premises				
About the Referendum Proposal				
P.M. more powerful	1-5	2.43	2.44	
Pres. no more powerful than Gov. Gen.	1-5	3.61	3.27	
Change to a republic expensive	1-5	3.88	4.03	
Remain member of Commonwealth	1-5	3.81	3.63	
Political stability endangered	1-5	2.04	2.26	*
Constitutional reform more difficult	1-5	2.32	2.67	***
Become a more independent country	1-5	3.63	3.77	
Standing in world improved	1-5	3.27	3.25	
Confrontations with PM more likely	1-5	3.02	3.45	***
States weakened	1-5	2.25	2.42	
Government more democratic	1-5	2.91	3.13	*

President less likely a politician	1-5	2.36	2.50	
Parties greater role in choosing president	1-5	4.05	4.04	
Australian flag change	1-2	1.59	1.63	
National anthem change	1-2	1.24	1.27	
Change use of word 'royal'	1-2	1.69	1.69	
Change participation in C'wealth Games	1-2	1.23	1.25	
<i>About the Status Quo</i>				
Queen important in guaranteeing rights	1-5	2.09	2.20	
Queen promotes British interests	1-5	3.71	3.74	
Satisfied with democracy	1-4	2.90	2.73	**
<i>Attitudes toward Groups</i>				
Feeling toward politicians	1-5	2.73	2.57	*
Feeling toward monarchists	1-5	2.84	2.91	
Feeling toward republicans	1-5	3.29	3.16	
No say about what government does	1-5	3.53	3.75	*
Opinions worth listening to	1-5	4.02	3.64	***
<i>General Opinion</i>				
British heritage important	1-5	3.55	3.51	
Preserve traditional ways	1-5	3.41	3.61	*
Do what majority wants	1-5	3.07	2.92	
<i>Knowledge</i>				
<i>Referendum</i>				
Fact: President like Governor General	0-1	0.40	0.26	***
Fact: P.M. remove president	0-1	0.16	0.09	**
Fact: Queen appoints Governor General	0-1	0.39	0.26	***
Fact: Governor General dismiss gov't	0-1	0.53	0.44	**
<i>Political</i>				
Fact: Labor pty more in favor of republic	0-1	0.47	0.39	**
Fact: Labor more concerned w/ welfare	0-1	0.42	0.32	**
Fact: Liberal pty closer to business	0-1	0.59	0.51	*
Fact: Aden Ridgeway	0-1	0.46	0.33	***
Fact: Jennie George	0-1	0.63	0.51	***

Note. The means for participants and nonparticipants are based on the initial interview. All variables are scored so that higher numbers indicate greater agreement, extent, or quantity. The two-tailed p value is based on the difference in the means of the two groups under the null hypothesis of no difference.

*Statistically significant at the .05 level (two-tailed test).

** Statistically significant at the .01 level (two-tailed test).

*** Statistically significant at the .001 level (two-tailed test).

A.2 Categorical Items

	Number of Categories	Chi-square Statistic	
Region of residence	13	22.231	*
Marital status	6	3.741	
Occupation	9	32.044	***
Party identification	7	14.312	*
First option on changing republic	3	7.387	*
Second option on changing republic	3	0.832	
Role of Aden Ridgeway	5	2.414	
Role of Jennie George	5	4.835	

*Statistically significant at the .05 level.

**Statistically significant at the .01 level.

***Statistically significant at the .001 level.

 NOTES

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¹We shall use terms like “information,” “knowledge,” “sophistication,” and “expertise” equivalently,” despite subtle differences among them. On the differences and the reasonability of ignoring them, see Luskin (2000a).

²On the general problems w these approaches, see Luskin (1987).

³Page and Shapiro (xxxx) argue, à la Condorcet, that ignorance may lead voters individually astray, but that “magic of aggregation” nonetheless ensures that the aggregate distributions of actual and full-information preferences are essentially the same. The argument hinges, however, on the assumption that the individual-level errors are random, which they clearly are not (Bartels 1996, Luskin 2000b). Empirically too the contention is plainly false (Bartels 1996, Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996, Luskin and Globetti 1997, Althaus 1998).

⁴This section draws on Higley and Evans-Case (2000).

⁵Constitutional amendments in Australia must be put to the voters in a referendum, after passed both houses of parliament with an absolute majority in each. The government controls the wording of the referendum proposal and the content of the implementing legislation. Passage requires majorities both of all voters nationally and of the voters in each of a majority (four) of the six states. Unsurprisingly, given all this, only eight of the forty-two constitutional referendums proposed over the past century have passed.

⁶There was also provision for a broadly representative committee of prominent citizens to present the prime minister with presidential nominations solicited from the community. The list would be entirely non-binding, however.

⁷Assuming no election was called in the meantime. In the case of a president’s being removed, the senior state governor would automatically become interim president, pending nomination and appointment of a new president through the process just described.

⁸In particular, codifying the president’s “reserve powers” to deal with parliamentary deadlocks.

⁹For a detailed account, see Turnbull (xxxx: 43-77).

¹⁰Most of the No leaders making these claims were, of course, politicians.

¹¹ A second referendum proposal, to add a preamble to the Constitution, was even more soundly defeated.

¹²Deliberative Polling also aspires to influencing the outcomes of elections, including referenda, and the course of policy-making between elections—not in any particular direction of our choosing, of course, but in whatever direction a more informed public seems to prefer (see Fishkin and Luskin 2005). Thus virtually every Deliberative Poll so far has been televised, either live or in taped and edited form.

¹³See Luskin and Fishkin (2002).

¹⁴The differences between participants and nonparticipants are necessarily larger and almost always more statistically significant than those between the participants and whole interview sample (of both participants and nonparticipants), making the results in Appendix A a conservative way of viewing the question of representativeness.

¹⁵These percentages, like those reported here generally, exclude DK responses and other missing data. The raw percentage intending to vote yes among our participants was 53%. In the whole public, in a contemporaneous poll, the percentage was 52%.

¹⁶ In 1998, only one percent of a national sample ranked the republic issue among the three most important issues the Howard government should address (Morgan Poll cited in *Multiculturalism Report*, April 1999).

¹⁷This change might well have been larger, had the item been more straightforwardly worded. Respondents should have been asked to agree or disagree with the statement that the parties would be more involved in the selection of a *directly elected* president, not that they would be more involved in the selection of an appointed one.

¹⁸If instead I_2 is taken strictly at face value, our expectation about the sign of γ_1 is instead the expectation the people who emerge knowing the most change the most.

¹⁹In this case the small group variable cannot be split apart—intuitively, because both the initial No voters and the initial Yes voters can only land in two of the three categories of the dependent variable. (The former can only be in the no-change or No-to-Yes category, the latter only in the no-change or Yes-to-No category.)