

MEDIA RELEASE – under strict embargo until 12 November 2014

Younger generations turn tide against compulsory voting

Compulsory voting has always been a stable element of Australia’s democracy but new research released today shows that younger generations are increasingly against the practice.

The research, conducted by the Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House in conjunction with the Institute for Governance at the University of Canberra, is being featured in a ground breaking new interactive exhibition, *Power of 1: Does your voice count?*, which explores different generational attitudes to our political system.

In the research, 30 per cent of those surveyed had negative views on compulsory voting. Younger generations were more likely to have negative views with 39 per cent of Generation Y and 36 per cent of Generation X against compulsory voting. This compared with Baby Boomers (27 per cent) and Builders (16 per cent).

Negative views on compulsory voting include that the government should not be able to force people to vote, or that it forces voters to make uninformed decisions just to avoid fines.

Daryl Karp, Director at the Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House, says there has never been a more important time to have this discussion about democracy.

“This exhibition invites Australians to visit in person or online and contribute their views on elements of our political system, like compulsory voting. *Power of 1* will encourage debate and discussion on these important parts of our democracy,” she said.

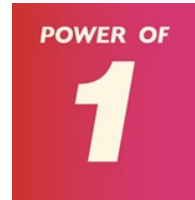
GenY entrepreneur and philanthropist, Dr Sam Prince, who contributed to the exhibition agrees that compulsory voting can be a bad thing for democracy.

“I can see both sides but you really want people to be voting who are passionate about the leadership of this country, talk through the issues and care enough to vote,” he said.

GenX Masterchef winner Adam Liaw agrees: “I think that there are a huge number of uninformed voters that are forced to take part in our democracy when they really do not have that strong of an opinion, or even an informed opinion of the way they want to go.

Liaw, who also contributed his views to the exhibition, concedes however that compulsory voting helps make sure that we are hearing the views of everyone in the population.

“I think one of the great things about compulsory voting is that it forces our political system and our politicians to attempt, at least, to educate much larger areas of the community, rather than only those that are more likely to vote.”



Power of 1: Does your voice count? features the results of a baseline survey on generational views to democracy in an interactive exhibition. Visitors can contribute their views, either online or at the exhibition. The exhibition will be updated every quarter with results and stories from visitors adding to the current survey data.

Power of 1: Does your voice count? is currently on display at the Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House, and is open daily from 9am-5pm. The Power of 1 survey is also available online at www.sbs.com.au/powerof1

For more information visit: moadoph.gov.au

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For further information please contact:

David Micallef, david@fenton.com.au , 03 9600 0006 / 0430 090 224

Cassandra Stafford, Cassandra.stafford@fenton.com.au, 03 9600 0006 / 0452 646 411

Filming and interview opportunities

Filming opportunities are available at the *Power of 1* exhibition. The exhibition features four rooms with influencers from each generation and a tally room that visualises the results of the survey into a physical display.

Interview opportunities are also available:

- Daryl Karp, Director, Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House
- Professor Mark Evans, Director and Professor of Governance, Institute for Governance at the University of Canberra
- Rachael Coghlan, Manager – Community Engagement, Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House

About the survey

Ipsos on behalf of the Museum of Australian Democracy and the Institute for Governance conducted the national baseline survey. The survey had a sample size of 826 participants representative of all states and territories (including regional) and four Australian generations:

- Builders – Born between 1925 and 1945
- Baby Boomers – Born between 1946 and 1964
- Generation X – Born between 1965 and 1979
- Generation Y – Born between 1980 and 1995

References to the survey should credit the Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House and the Institute for Governance at the University of Canberra.