Young people and politics

Philippa Collin and Jane McCormack

Key terms/names

active citizenship, citizenship, dutiful citizen, engagement, interest groups, internet, mobilisation, participation, politics, political socialisation, representation, self-actualising citizen, social movement, youth

'[W]e do not support our schools being turned into parliaments'
'What we want is more learning in schools and less activism in schools'
Prime Minister of Australia, Scott Morrison[1]

Young people's relationship to democracy is a dynamic one. Over time, how youth, participation and citizenship are defined has changed, reflecting the persistent and changing norms and conventions of Australian society and politics. As suggested by Scott Morrison's response to the student-led 'School Strike 4 Climate', there are both firm and contested ideas about who young citizens are and their role in Australian democracy. These reflect how 'youth', as a life stage, is conceptualised, how citizenship is defined, how people develop and express political views and behaviours and create, share and consume political media, what constitutes

---

1   Australian Associated Press 2018.

participation and how people exercise their rights and responsibilities in Australian democracy and shape its ongoing evolution.

This chapter looks at how young people's relationships to politics have changed and diversified over time. It first considers how young people's citizenship and their role in democracy can be conceptualised. The second section looks at young people's status in Australian politics – in formal processes, policy and advocacy. The final section discusses how young people's political interests and participation in democracy are evolving in relation to the constraints and opportunities of Australian democracy.

Conceptualising young citizens

Like most concepts in social science, 'citizenship' and 'youth' are not 'natural' – actually, they are highly contested! Not only has their meaning changed over time, there are also lively and continuing debates about how we should think about these terms – and therefore who can participate in democracy and how.

Citizenship

Citizenship is a key term in theories of democracy because it defines who belongs to a particular community – or to a state such as Australia. In this regard, citizenship refers to a legal and administrative status – specifically membership of a political community. Citizens have *rights* – for example, to vote and to help decide how their community or country is governed. Liberal theories of democracy present the exercise of rights as the most important form of political participation; citizens need knowledge and experience to understand and use their rights well. Citizens also have democratic duties and responsibilities. For example, communitarian theories argue that citizenship is fostered through a sense of belonging, which requires that people join communities and associations to learn about and contribute to democracy in ways that benefit the broader group – or 'common good'. This way of thinking about citizenship connects to the idea of 'active citizenship', which is often evoked in youth policy,[2] and suggests that to qualify as citizens young people must demonstrate that they contribute to civic associations.

Throughout history, many people have pointed out that these rights, and opportunities to exercise the responsibilities of citizenship, are not experienced equally by all. For instance, until the 20th century in most democracies, women were citizens but lacked some political and civil rights, such as the right to vote or to own property. So radical theories of democracy – such as *feminism* – argue that citizenship is necessarily exclusionary, producing 'second- or third-class citizens' because some members of political communities are less valued and more

---

2   Harris 2012.

marginalised and disadvantaged than others. They point out that citizenship is enacted when people and groups challenge who 'counts' as a citizen by undertaking 'acts' such as speaking, marching or posting content online to express opinions or to protest an event or issue – thus constituting themselves as members of a public. These different theories of citizenship all affect how young people are perceived in Australian politics.[3]

Youth

While 'youth' can refer to a stage of life somewhere between 'childhood' and 'adulthood', the term is ambiguous because it is hard to determine when childhood stops or adulthood starts. Historically, psychology and developmental sociology have viewed 'youth' as a universal, biological stage through which young people should pass on normal pathways to (full) 'adult' citizenship.

However, there is no distinct age at which young people become 'adult' or 'full citizens' in Australia. Young people can leave formal education at 15 (depending on the jurisdiction) but are not paid 'adult' wages until they are 21; they can be held criminally responsible for their acts from the age of 10 and be jailed in adult prisons from 17, and yet, for the purposes of youth support payments, they are generally not considered 'independent' until they are 22.[4] While (in certain industries) there is no minimum age at which a young person can gain employment and pay income tax, they are not allowed to vote until they are 18.

Broadly speaking, youth policy defines 'young people' as aged 12–25 years, but the ambiguity reflects the fact that the experience of youth is not 'fixed' – it is shaped by context, policy and lived experience and in relationship to social institutions, like the family and education and justice systems. Sociologists White and Wyn describe youth as a 'relational term' – meaning it is mostly defined in relation to what it is not.[5] Just as young people are 'not yet adult', they are largely constructed in mainstream political discourse as not yet (full) citizens. This contributes to the idea that young people are only fully of value 'in the future' – and that they need to be monitored and managed towards 'good citizenship' in the interests of protecting society's future.[6] Over time, concerns about whether or not young people will develop into 'normatively good' citizens have manifested differently in scholarship and policy but have frequently been anchored to the question of how people acquire political knowledge and behaviours – or *political socialisation*.

In the 1950s, scholars of *political socialisation* were particularly concerned with how children and young people develop political orientations and the way families,

---

3   See Collin 2015, Furlong 2012, and Marsh, O'Toole and Jones 2007 for further reading.
4   See Department of Human Services 2019.
5   Wyn and White 1997.
6   See White, Wyn and Robards 2017, chapter 11.

schools and existing community and government structures help young people to learn and 'practise' civic skills.[7] In the 1960s and 1970s, as young people were increasingly questioning traditional values, creating new cultures and leading or participating in social movements, researchers and policy makers asked questions about the participatory rights of children and young people. This is exemplified in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990). The convention has a specific article that lays out children and young people's 'right to participation and to be heard in decisions that affect them' (article 12). Since the 1990s, significant interest in how to realise young people's right to participate in community and government decision making has arisen. Sometimes this is termed 'youth development' – helping young people to grow into good adult citizens. Governments and non-government organisations have also introduced programs and strategies to enable youth participation as 'active citizens' – where young people participate in approved ways in adult-managed processes.[8]

Rather than linear progress in the understanding and recognition of young people as political actors, these phases are better thought of in terms of emerging, contrasting and sometimes overlapping concerns, approaches and debates about the nature of youth citizenship and participation. For example, in Australia, since 2000 there has also been an effort to design and deliver 'civic education' through schools and other programs; in civil society there has been a burgeoning of organisations, local networks and youth-led movements advocating and developing a wide range of strategies and forms of youth political participation.

The status of young people in Australian democracy

Young people's status in Australian democracy is ambiguous. As described above, a range of laws and different age thresholds govern young people – although only those young people aged 18 and over are ascribed full political rights and can vote and run for office. A number of Australia's political parties have federal and state 'youth wings' that are open to members of various ages. For example, the Young Liberals' federal branch is currently open to those between 16 and 31,[9] while Australian Young Labor is currently open to those between 14 and 26.[10] Statistics regarding young people's membership or involvement in party activities are seldom published, however, making accurate assessment of how many young Australians are actively involved in political parties difficult.

What young people can – or should – do has been increasingly 'governed' (regulated by policies and laws) since the middle of the 19th century, when

---

7   See Edwards 2012 for a good summary and discussion.
8   Bell, Vromen and Collin 2008.
9   Young Liberals 2019.
10   Australian Young Labor n.d.

parliaments in Western countries started to legislate in areas such as education (compulsory schooling), justice (laws and institutions for 'juveniles') and work (minimum working age).[11]

Increasing governance reflects a 'deficit' approach that emphasises what young people are presumed to lack; it also contributes to a focus on the value young people hold as 'future citizens' rather than as citizens of the present.[12] Another effect of policy making *for* young people is that particular areas of policy (such as education, mental health, work) are seen as 'youth issues', while others (such as tax, transport and climate) are generally not. This is another way in which young people are constructed as 'trainee citizens', as is exemplified by ongoing debates about the age at which people should be allowed to vote.

Case study: lowering the voting age – the debate

The debate about the minimum voting age is almost as old as the franchise itself. From the 1960s onwards, most established democracies lowered the voting age from 21 to 18, including Australia in 1973. Since then, debate has turned to extending the franchise to those aged 16 and over. Indeed, the voting age has been lowered to 16 (in a variety of circumstances) in Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Brazil, Norway, the Philippines, Scotland, Argentina, Cuba, Ecuador and Nicaragua.[13] Currently, young Australians can enrol to vote at 16 and vote when they turn 18. In 2018, Senator Jordan Steele-John (Australian Greens) introduced a Bill proposing to lower the minimum (non-compulsory) voting age to 16.[14]

The arguments for and against lowering the voting age are wide-ranging and have evolved over the past five decades. Rights-based arguments include: that young people should be allowed opportunities to vote for the governments and members of parliament that make decisions on policy that affects them, and that reducing the franchise to 16 would bring it into line with other legal and administrative thresholds that permit young people to, for example, enlist in the defence forces (at age 16.5), consent to sexual interactions (at 16) and get a driver's licence (16 in most states).[15] Advocates also argue that lowering the voting age could positively address the marginalisation from mainstream politics that many young people experience[16] by signalling that their views and participation are valued at an institutional level.

Opponents maintain that young people are not mature, knowledgeable or responsible enough. Recently, some have used neuroscience to argue that adolescent

---

11 White, Wyn and Robards 2017, 266–8.
12 Cohen 1997; Prout 1999.
13 Bessant et al. 2018.
14 Commonwealth of Australia 2018.
15 See Bessant et al. 2018; Collin 2018.
16 Collin 2015; Harris 2012.

brains cannot manage the rational and logical processes required for voting. Some suggest that young people's views are already adequately represented in the political system and that there is little evidence to indicate that lowering the voting age will increase participation.[17]

Australia's leading experts in electoral participation maintain that there is simply not enough evidence to determine the effect of lowering the voting age on the political engagement of young people and on Australian democracy more broadly.[18]

Another feature of young people's relationship to democracy in Australia is that youth interests are inconsistently represented at different levels of government. Treatment of these interests has historically depended on the political priorities of the parties in government. Various attempts to engage with young people in policy processes at a federal level have been developed at different times since the 1980s. For example, in 2007, the newly elected Labor government appointed a Minister for Youth and re-funded the national youth peak body (the Australian Youth Affairs Coalition). The government invested in national research and consultations to create a National Youth Strategy (2010).[19] It also created 'experimental' mechanisms for engaging with young people in agenda setting and policy making, such as the Australian Youth Forum – an online platform to promote discussion by and with young people on policy issues. A federal Office for Youth Affairs has also existed at various times. Its purpose has largely been to research government action on youth issues and to support the planning and co-ordination of policies and services that affect young Australians.[20]

Since 2013, Australian federal governments have supported a National Children's Commissioner, who advocates for the rights and interests of children, and reviews and reports on legislation, policy and practice that affects them. After its election in 2013, the Liberal–National (Coalition) government defunded most federal-level youth policy initiatives, abolished parliamentary representation and closed the Office for Youth.

Variation in how young people are represented in government extends to the states and territories of Australia. Prior to 2013, only some states had dedicated youth offices, government-funded initiatives and/or children's advocates or commissioners to enable young people's participation and ensure their needs were considered across government. As of early 2019, however, all state and territory governments have some form of goal, aim, vision, mission or commitment that recognises the importance of hearing young people's voices; most have developed (or are developing) youth policies or strategies with young people's input; most

---

17 McAllister 2014; Young Liberals 2018.
18 McAllister 2014.
19 Australian Government 2010.
20 Ewen 1995, 30.

have some form of youth advisory group that feeds into government; and all have children's advocates or commissioners.

In response to the challenges of representation, an active 'youth sector' has emerged in Australia, made up of a range of 'interest groups' – organisations seeking to represent and advocate for the interests of young people and to influence public policy. These include community and non-government organisations of varying sizes, such as large charities, service providers, social movement organisations and associations. There is also a network of national, state and territory peak bodies for youth affairs. Young people are extensively involved in or lead many of them. An important contribution the youth sector has made to youth politics is in the area of participation, by advocating for young people's right to be heard, particularly when it comes to issues and policies that affect them. These organisations consult with young people about relevant issues and advocate for young people's participation in policy and decision making; many provide training and resources to assist communities, organisations and government bodies to better engage young people in their agenda-setting processes and other activities. Popular engagement mechanisms include youth advisory committees, youth executives, in-person and online consultations and forums, and the co-design of relevant initiatives.

Engaged and active citizens?

Much research on youth political participation has focused on levels of political knowledge or 'civic literacy', electoral participation and membership of traditional civil society organisations (such as churches and charities). These are 'institutional' measures of participation. Studies using these measures identify increasingly low levels of knowledge, trust, membership and support for traditional political actors (e.g. politicians), institutions (e.g. parties) and 'repertoires' of participation (e.g. voting or joining a political party or union) among young people.[21] For example, 2004 research by the Youth Electoral Study showed that only 50 per cent of surveyed Australian high school students would enrol to vote if it was not compulsory. Some scholars and commentators interpret this as indicating greater apathy and/or poor civics knowledge among young people.

However, other researchers argue that these studies' definitions of 'politics' and 'participation' (e.g. as elections and voting) do not reflect the broader ways young people think about or practise politics. They show that young people engage in a wide range of non-electoral, 'cause-oriented' participatory practices, including signing petitions, buying a particular brand or product because of a political belief, taking part in demonstrations and joining online or local issues-based groups.[22]

---

21   Collin 2015, 8–9.
22   Harris and Wyn 2009; Martin 2012; Norris 2003; Vromen 2003.

Rather than participating in politics mainly due to a sense of obligation to particular forms of democracy and democratic institutions (e.g. political parties or government), the theory is that young people participate because of *causes* or *issues*, such as violence, climate change or corruption.[23]

Case study: youth activism and networked participation

Many young Australians actively participate in social movements, activist organisations and other initiatives in which they learn about and campaign on issues that concern them. In recent decades youth-led issues-based movements have blossomed, using the internet and social media to connect with and mobilise their young members and grow national and global networks for action. For example, the Australian Youth Climate Coalition (AYCC) emerged in the early to mid-2000s as a youth-led organisation founded and governed by young people and based on strong coalitions with other organisations and movements. In contrast with older styles of civic organising, the more than 150,000 AYCC 'members' can choose their level of involvement – and self-organise. For example, the AYCC encourages 'members' to organise their own actions – online and offline – and runs different campaigns and activities from which members can 'pick and choose'. They are also unique for running workshops and training aimed at school-age students, as well as networking and building coalitions with aligned causes and communities.

Another youth-led issue-based movement emerged in 2018, when school students from Castlemaine, Victoria, organised with peers to demand that parliamentarians take urgent action on climate change. Inspired by 15-year-old Swedish school student Greta Thunberg, who had regularly gone on strike from school to bring attention to the climate crisis, they coordinated with a group of classmates to go on strike and journey every week to the offices of different members of parliament in their region to stage a similar event. Organised by word of mouth, eight initial school strikes in the Castlemaine region attracted between 20 and 50 students to each event. Following the success of the initial strikes, the AYCC helped the Castlemaine students create a webpage for their movement and develop a campaign strategy, trained them in organising events and, importantly, helped them generate a social media presence to allow a decentralised model that would support students anywhere in Australia to organise and co-ordinate their own school strikes for climate action. An online community grew, and students across Australia began to co-ordinate and organise in their own regions.[24] On 30 November 2018, an estimated 15,000 students temporarily left school to attend rallies in 30 locations around Australia to demand that politicians take immediate action on climate change. This (school) student movement has spawned similar groups and developed informal

---

23   Norris 2003.
24   Susie Burke, emails, 20 and 26 March 2019.

links to other groups and campaigns, such as #FridaysForFuture. On 15 March 2019, 150,000 students in 56 locations around Australia were some of an estimated 2.29 million strikers across 2,699 sites in 135 countries participating in a School Strike for Climate.[25]

Lance Bennett uses 'dutiful' and 'self-actualising' to describe two ways of thinking about contemporary citizenship.[26] Dutiful citizens are guided by ideologies, mass movements and traditional loyalties to particular parties and the values, processes and institutions that constitute representative government. In contrast, self-actualising citizens respond to personal political concerns and connect informally to issues through family and friendship groups, lifestyle and identity. They value participatory forms of governance where different members of society inform and influence government decision making. Thinking about dutiful and self-actualising citizens helps to move away from debates about whether young people are 'more' or 'less' politically active now than they have been in the past. While young Australians are less involved in traditional organisations, such as churches, charities and political parties,[27] they do participate in online and local activities run by community groups, organisations and networks and create their own campaigns and actions. A 2018 Mission Australia survey of 28,286 15- to 19-year-olds found that 36.8 per cent participated in volunteer work, 36.4 per cent in arts/cultural/music activities, 27.4 per cent in student leadership, 22.6 per cent in youth groups and 18.8 per cent in religious groups.[28]

The internet is key to changes in how people participate.[29] The extent to which the internet mobilises new political actors or improves engagement is widely debated. It is generally accepted that social life is increasingly mediated by digital technologies and networks. The internet plays an important role in youth political practice as a means for: seeking news, information and opinions on social and political issues; communication and cultural expression; and joining and/or participating in online organisations and interest groups.[30]

Loader, Vromen and Xenos[31] build on the concept of the self-actualising citizen in developing the idea of the 'networked young citizen'. The term describes how young people now relate to democracy through an explicit emphasis on identity, personalisation, participation and horizontal relations for civic and political engagement, and the role that the internet, and specifically social media, plays. Their research on the role of the internet produces some counter intuitive findings.

25   #FridaysforFuture 2019.
26   Bennett 2007.
27   Martin 2012; Vromen 2003.
28   Carlisle et al. 2018, 30.
29   Collin 2015; Vromen 2011.
30   Loader, Vromen and Xenos 2014; Stanyer 2005; Vromen 2007.
31   Loader, Vromen and Xenos 2014.

For example, while some are concerned about an 'echo chamber' effect, recent international comparative research finds that regular review of a social media news-feed can expose young people to incidental information on political issues and activities that they might not otherwise be knowledgeable about or interested in.[32]

While these new understandings of young people's participation in democracy help to challenge mainstream stereotypes, it is important to remember that young people are not a homogenous group and that these new networks and forms of participation are not accessible to all young people. Digital media do not necessarily equalise participation opportunities; quality of use and access – and the ways people participate online – can be affected by factors such as gender, level of education and socio-economic and cultural backgrounds.[33] While some organisations and institutions enhance participation via the internet, generally speaking, the barriers to participation that exist offline persist online.[34] In Australia, governments at all levels are only just beginning to adopt online strategies to engage meaningfully with citizens (of any age).[35]

Moreover, the discourse of the self-actualising citizen may amplify the adoption of a 'self-reflexive experience of inequality'[36] – whereby young people assume personal responsibility for addressing structural or global problems such as housing unaffordability or climate change, which they are unable to respond to alone. Henrik Bang has warned that while 'everyday' political practices – such as ethical consumerism or issues-based social media advocacy – can be empowering for young people, they are also associated with less direct engagement between citizens and policy makers.[37] This is a process he calls 'de-coupling' – where the politics of everyday practices are removed from the politics of formal institutions and actors. Another concern is that alongside discourses of 'active', self-actualising and networked citizenship run equally powerful discourses that construct young people as apathetic or antisocial.

A focus on understanding why people choose not to engage in institutional forms of political participation in new scholarship has helped to show that disengagement can be a conscious response to experiences of exclusion, loss of trust or desperation with the 'system'.[38] Anita Harris argues that central to contemporary globalisation and neoliberalism are ideas of self-invention, consumption and engagement in mainstream political and civic activities that are at the heart of the discourse of 'active citizenship'; young people are accordingly constructed as 'failed citizens' if they are unable to overcome hardship or exclusion or comply

---

32   Xenos, Vromen and Loader 2014 .
33   boyd 2014; Mossberger, Tolbert and McNeal 2008; Vromen 2007; Xenos, Vromen and Loader 2014.
34   Banaji and Buckingham 2013.
35   Collin 2015.
36   Threadgold 2011.
37   Bang 2005.
38   Edwards 2009; Farthing 2010.

with normative expectations of a neoliberal society.[39] Acts that directly challenge the power of adults, institutions and the nation-state are rendered invisible or cast as antisocial or anti-democratic (e.g. civil disruption, hacking websites or wearing religious dress).[40] This extends to unemployed or minority young people (such as those from Indigenous or migrant backgrounds) whose daily and cultural practices may confront the status quo – and who are the main targets of 'youth engagement' policies.

Young people as a group are frequently derided by political elites as not yet worthy of political voice and agency. They also witness negative views on politics expressed in the media and by the adults around them. The political parties rarely address young people on their own terms, about their concerns and with deep commitment to addressing the complex issues society faces. In light of large youth mobilisations such as #SchoolStrike4Climate and the associated youth climate movement, it is difficult to maintain that Australian young people are disengaged from politics – even if they are excluded from formal processes of government. Rather, declines in institutional acts may be due to the emergence of new opportunities for participation through activist and issue-based networks.

While these loose networks mostly exclude the state and its representatives, the youth climate action movement highlights how youth movements arise out of informal coalitions and partnerships between businesses, voluntary organisations and public institutions (such as schools). School students challenge the authority of the state by calling on their peers, communities and other actors such as celebrities and big businesses to do more. But young people also engage with governments through a variety of youth participation mechanisms, voting, advocacy and campaigning.[41] As such, young people may not be acting against or turning away from government and other formal institutions of democracy but looking beyond them to shape the kind of society they want to live in. Importantly, this does not mean that young people see democracy as irrelevant – many young people acutely feel the role of government in their everyday lives.[42] Young people may not be loyal to institutions and processes of democracy, but they do have a sense of being both marginalised and controlled by the state, which demonstrates that the state still plays a significant role in shaping young people's views of politics and participation.

Conclusions

Young people reflect the anxieties and hopes of Australian democracy. Youth is not a fixed or natural category but one that is fluid and changing – produced by the

---

39   Harris 2012, 149.
40   Bessant, Farthing and Watts 2017, chapter 8.
41   Collin 2015.
42   Marsh, O'Toole and Jones 2007.

way young people are constructed in policy, social structures and different contexts. As such, young people occupy an ambiguous place in Australian democracy. Young people in Australia enrol to vote and participate in elections in high numbers. However, they are more likely to value and engage in non-electoral and non-institutional forms of political participation – especially local, individualised collective action (such as signing a petition or joining a march) and loose, cause-oriented networks that campaign on particular issues. In this regard, the views and behaviours of young people reflect generational shifts in the values and norms underpinning contemporary democracy – signalling exciting new ways forward.

However, young people remain a lightning rod for studies, explanations and strategies addressing perceived declines in support and engagement with traditional political institutions and elites. As such, the dominant approach is to focus attention on what can be done to 'engage young people' in existing democracy or to tweak political institutions, processes and cultures in order to respond to young people's preferences. Rather less common is the suggestion that young people's ideas and preferences could result in improvements in democracy – a more participatory, accountable, responsive and creative democracy capable of dealing with the complex policy problems of our time.

References

Australian Associated Press (2018). Scott Morrison tells students striking over climate change to be 'less activist'. *The Guardian*, 26 November. https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/nov/26/scott-morrison-tells-students-striking-over-climate-change-to-be-less-activist

Australian Government (2010). *National strategy for young Australians*. Canberra: Australian Government. https://apo.org.au/sites/default/files/resource-files/2010/04/apo-nid30323-1210776.pdf

Australian Young Labor (n.d.). Australian Young Labor is the largest political youth movement in Australia. http://www.australianyounglabor.org/

Banaji, Shakuntala, and David Buckingham (2013). *The civic web: young people, the internet and civic participation*. Cambridge, MA; London: MIT Press.

Bang, Henrik (2005). Among everyday makers and expert citizens. In Janet Newman, ed. *Remaking governance*, 159–79. Bristol, UK: The Policy Press.

Bell, Johanna, Ariadne Vromen and Phillipa Collin (2008). *Rewriting the rules for youth participation – inclusion and diversity in government and community decision making*. Canberra: National Youth Affairs Research Scheme.

Bennett, W. Lance (2007). Civic learning in changing democracies: challenges for citizenship and civic education. In Peter Dahlgren, ed. *Young citizens and new media: learning for democratic participation*, 59–77. New York: Routledge.

Bessant, Judith, Kerry Carrington, Mark Chou, Brendan Churchill, Anna Copeland and Anita Harris (2018). Submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters on the *Commonwealth Electoral Amendment (Lowering Voting Age and Increasing Voter Participation) Bill 2018*. http://www.aph.gov.au/DocumentStore.ashx?id=0835a792-e578-47d8-95f8-bd7c6a5391a0&subId=659182

Bessant, Judith, Rys Farthing and Rob Watts (2017). *The precarious generation: a political economy of young people*. Abingdon, UK; New York: Routledge.

boyd, danah (2014). *It's complicated: the social lives of networked teens*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Carlisle, Erin, Joann Fildes, Sabine Hall, Valancy Hicking, Brianna Perrens and Jacquelin Plummer (2018). *Youth survey report 2018*. Sydney: Mission Australia. https://www.missionaustralia.com.au/what-we-do/research-impact-policy-advocacy/youth-survey

Chadwick, Andrew (2007). Digital network repertoires and organizational hybridity. *Political Communication* 24(3): 283–301. DOI: 10.1080/10584600701471666

Cohen, Phil (1997). *Rethinking the youth question*. Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan.

Collin, Philippa (2018). Submission to Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters inquiry into the *Commonwealth Electoral Amendment (Lowering Voting Age and Increasing Voter Participation) Bill 2018*. http://www.aph.gov.au/DocumentStore.ashx?id=fb462bba-b936-4ed0-b87a-fe480ab57230&subId=658988

—— (2015). *Young citizens and political participation in a digital society: addressing the democratic disconnect*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Commonwealth of Australia (2018). *Commonwealth Electoral Amendment (Lowering Voting Age and Increasing Voter Participation) Bill 2018*. https://parlwork.aph.gov.au/bills/s1130

Department of Human Services (2019). Dependent or independent for Youth Allowance. https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/enablers/dependent-or-independent-youth-allowance/29921

Edwards, Kathy (2012). Political socialisation. In Rodney Smith, Ariadne Vromen and Ian Cook, eds. *Contemporary politics in Australia: theories, practices and issues*, 83–93. Melbourne: Cambridge University Press.

—— (2009). Disenfranchised, not 'deficient': how the (neoliberal) state disenfranchises young people. *Australian Journal of Social Issues* 44(1): 23–37. DOI: 10.1002/j.1839-4655.2009.tb00129.x

Ewen, John (1995). Co-ordination in youth affairs: why it has failed to work and how we could do better. *Youth Studies Australia* 14(3): 28–37.

Farthing, Rys (2010). The politics of youthful antipolitics: representing the 'issue' of youth participation in politics. *Journal of Youth Studies* 13(2): 181–95. DOI: 10.1080/13676260903233696

#FridaysforFuture (2019). Strike list. https://fridaysforfuture.org/statistics/list-countries

Furlong, Andy (2012). *Youth studies: an introduction*. New York: Routledge.

Harris, Anita (2012). Citizenship stories. In Nancy Lesko and Susan Talburt, eds. *Keywords in youth studies: tracing affects, movements, knowledges*, 143–53. New York: Routledge.

Harris, Anita, and Johanna Wyn (2009). Young people's politics and the micro-territories of the local. *Australian Journal of Political Science* 44(2): 327–44. DOI: 10.1080/10361140902865308

Loader, Brian D., Ariadne Vromen and Michael Xenos (2014). The networked young citizen: social media, political participation and civic engagement. *Information, Communication and Society* 17(2): 143–50. DOI: 10.1080/1369118X.2013.871571

Marsh, David, Therese O'Toole and Su Jones (2007). *Young people and politics in the UK: apathy or alienation?* Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Martin, Aaron (2012). *Young people and politics: political engagement in the Anglo-American democracies*. London; New York: Routledge.

McAllister, Ian (2014). The politics of lowering the voting age in Australia: evaluating the evidence. *Australian Journal of Political Science* 49(1): 68–83. DOI: 10.1080/10361146.2013.868402

Mossberger, Karen, Caroline J. Tolbert and Ramona S. McNeal (2008). *Digital citizenship: the internet, society and participation*. Cambridge, MA; London: MIT Press.

Norris, Pippa (2003). Young people and political activism: from the politics of loyalties to the politics of choice? Report for the Council of Europe Symposium on Young People and Democratic Institutions: From Disillusionment to Participation, Strasbourg, 27–28 November.

Prout, Alan (1999). Children – a suitable case for inclusion? Annual lecture, Centre for Public Policy Research, King's College, London.

Stanyer, James (2005). The British public and political attitude expression: the emergence of a self-expressive political culture? *Contemporary Politics* 11(1): 19–32. DOI: 10.1080/13569770500098623

Threadgold, Steven (2011). Should I pitch my tent in the middle ground? On 'middling tendency', Beck and inequality in youth sociology. *Journal of Youth Studies* 14(4): 381–93. DOI: 10.1080/13676261.2010.538042

Vromen, Ariadne (2011). Constructing Australian youth online: empowered but dutiful citizens? *Information, Communication and Society* 14(7): 959–80. DOI: 10.1080/1369118X.2010.549236

—— (2007). Australian young people's participatory practices and internet use. *Information, Communication and Society* 10(1): 48–68. DOI: 10.1080/13691180701193044

—— (2003). 'People try to put us down …': participatory citizenship of 'Generation X'. *Australian Journal of Political Science* 38(1): 79–99. DOI: 10.1080/1036114032000056260

White, Rob, Johanna Wyn and Brady Robards (2017). *Youth and society*, 4th edn. Melbourne: Oxford University Press.

Wyn, Johanna, and Rob White (1997). *Rethinking youth*. St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin.

Xenos, Michael, Ariadne Vromen and Brian D. Loader (2014). The great equalizer? Patterns of social media use and youth political engagement in three advanced democracies. *Information, Communication and Society* 17(2): 151–67. DOI: 10.1080/1369118X.2013.871318

Young Liberals (2019). Young Liberals. https://www.youngliberal.org.au/

—— (2018). Submission to Senator Linda Reynolds CSC, Chair, Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters. http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/Electoral_Matters/VotingAge/Submissions

About the authors

Dr Philippa Collin is principle research fellow at the Institute for Culture and Society at Western Sydney University. She researches the politics of youth and the role of digital media for participation, citizenship, health and wellbeing. Philippa is the author of *Young citizens and political participation in a digital society*: *addressing the democratic disconnec*t (2015) and co-author of *Young people in digital society: control shift* (2019). She is co-director of the Intergener8 Living Lab and is a stream leader in the Wellbeing, Health and Youth Centre of Research Excellence in Adolescent Health.

Jane McCormack has conducted research in academic, advisory, commercial and non-government organisation contexts across a range of topics, including social media and the wellbeing of children and young people, and young people's participation in democracy.