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Abstract: Most electoral studies research on Australian cities has focused on the characteristics of voters in a city. This research focus has been preferred to examining the geography of a political party’s electoral performance across a particular urban electoral landscape. Yet, urban electorates are often crucial to the electoral prospects of political parties at state or federal elections. This paper will examine the geography of the electoral performances and presence of four minor parties (Australian Democrats, Family First, Greens and One Nation) at state and federal elections held between 1997 and 2006, utilising the cities of Adelaide and Sydney as case studies. Examinations of election results point towards distinct geographies of minor party electoral performances. These geographical differences are highlighted through variations in voting patterns for the various political parties in a given urban electoral setting. Variations in electoral performances also point towards differences in voter attitudes, such as the prioritising of economic and quality-of-life issues in determining their political allegiances. Changes in the geographies of minor party electoral performances may be used to indicate how these parties could be barometers of broader electoral trends.

Introduction: Assessing the urban electoral landscape

Undertaking examinations of the urban electoral landscape is a worthwhile approach for furthering knowledge of how cities contribute to shaping a nation’s political life. Various studies have been conducted by geographers to develop knowledge of urban electoral landscape dynamics at both domestic and international scales. Internationally, a number of studies have examined how voter behaviour can be influenced by the urban setting. These studies have used case studies of cities such as Chicago (Kasperson, 1965), London (Cox, 1971) and Toronto, Montréal and Vancouver (Walks, 2007). Some studies have also profiled the demographic composition of electoral support for various political parties and its implications for spatial distribution of political information (e.g. Cox, 1968; Walks, 2007). Other studies have examined how social interaction occurs in an urban environment and its affects on voter behaviour (e.g. Baybeck and Huckfeldt, 2002). Whilst many of these studies have utilised case studies to assess the electoral geography of an urban area, Kasperson (1965, p.95) has noted that this aspect of political geography research has been neglected for the most part. Whilst these studies have offered many worthwhile insights into the relationship between voter behaviour and the urban environment, there are opportunities for further research to be conducted. Addressing Kasperson’s (1965, p.95) concerns would be beneficial for expanding existing knowledge of urban electoral landscape settings and patterns of voter behaviour.

In the Australian context, researchers have been willing to explore the electoral geography of the urban electoral landscape in a similar vein to various international studies. Some studies have examined the influence of the urban electoral landscape on voter behaviour in Australian cities (e.g. Forrest, 1988; Scanlan, 1977). Most interestingly, Forrest’s (1988) study examined whether urbanisation has affected the development of an ‘ethnic vote’ amongst non-Anglo communities in Australian cities. Other studies conducted have examined how the structure of urban areas has contributed to variations in voting patterns (Forrest et al, 1984; Walmsley, 1977). These studies have categorised urban areas, based on distance from the city centre and the definition of a city’s metropolitan area. More recently, Australian electoral geography examining urban areas have covered a broader range of topics. One example of this coverage expansion has been assessments of the electoral geography of minor party electoral performances in Australian cities (e.g. Davis and Stimson, 1998; Smith, 2003 & 2005; Stimson et al, 2006). These studies have utilised state and federal elections held between 1997 and 2006 as case studies and have examined several political parties. Minor parties examined in these studies have included Australians Against Further Immigration, the Australian Democrats, the Greens, One Nation and Unity. Australian electoral geography studies on urban areas illustrate that Australian cities can provide a fertile ground for electoral studies research. This is especially apparent in the light of current electoral trends in Australian urban electoral settings and their broader implications for the various participants.
Establishing the geography of minor party electoral performances in urban Australian electorates

Profiling the urban electoral landscape and how it affects minor parties in Australian urban electoral landscape settings are topics that are worthy of further examination. This paper explores this subject matter through two approaches. First, an examination of the structure of the urban Australian electoral landscape was conducted, utilising voter enrolment figures and electorate composition information from the 2004 Federal Election. This information was obtained from the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC). Assessments of this data were undertaken to gauge the significance of metropolitan Australia as part of the Australian electoral landscape. Australia's five largest cities (Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth and Adelaide) were used as case studies for this purpose. Second, this paper presents a comparative analysis of the geography of minor party electoral performances in Sydney and Adelaide at state and federal elections held between 1997 and 2006. Results data from lower house elections were utilised to assess the electoral performances and candidate standings of these parties in state and federal lower house elections in Sydney and Adelaide. This data was obtained from the AEC for federal elections and the New South Wales State Electoral Office (now NSW Electoral Commission) and the State Electoral Office of South Australia for state elections. Sydney and Adelaide were chosen to compare and contrast electoral support patterns for minor parties and evaluate electoral trends affecting minor party performances in Australian cities. The time period from 1997 until 2006 was selected to provide a temporal perspective on variations in minor party electoral performances in Australian cities. Four political parties were assessed in this study: the Australian Democrats, Family First, the Greens and One Nation. These parties were chosen on the basis that they fielded candidates at a minimum of one election in both cities, and have encountered differing electoral fortunes. This research has sought to address knowledge gaps of minor parties in Australian cities from previous electoral geography research. In addition, this research has also sought to highlight the significance of Australian cities as electoral ‘barometers’ and highlight implications for minor party electoral prospects.

Profiling the urban Australian electoral landscape

The composition of the Australian electoral landscape provides crucial insights for undertaking any assessment of the significance of electorates along an urban-rural paradigm. Examinations of voter enrolment figures and the electorate categorisation applied by the AEC (2005a) at the 2004 Federal Election provides a useful case study in this regard. At the 2004 Federal Election, 87 out of the 150 House of Representative electorates were classified by the AEC as metropolitan electorates (Table 1). Metropolitan electorates accounted for 58 percent of all House of Representative electorates. 58 percent of registered voters at the 2004 Federal Election resided in metropolitan electorates (Table 1). These figures indicate that metropolitan Australia can be regarded as an electoral ‘barometer’ for the Australian electoral landscape. This is premised on the notion that a majority of electorates and voters can be found within metropolitan Australia. The composition of the electoral landscape and voter presence are especially important to consider for any examination conducted on the geography of the Australian electoral landscape that involves assessments of electoral trends, voter behaviour and constituency formation.

Table 1: Enrolment figures and electorate composition by category, 2004 Federal Election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Electorate category</th>
<th>Total enrolled voters</th>
<th>% enrolled voters</th>
<th>Total no. of electorates</th>
<th>% electorates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan</td>
<td>7,621,607</td>
<td>58.19</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>58.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provincial</td>
<td>1,811,078</td>
<td>13.83</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>14.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>3,665,776</td>
<td>27.99</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>28.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>13,098,461</td>
<td></td>
<td>150</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examinations of electoral composition of Australia’s five largest cities at the 2004 Federal Election highlight variations in their electoral significance of the major cities within their home state. Voter enrolment figures and electorate composition in the five largest Australian cities have produced some interesting findings on the electoral significance of Australia’s five largest cities within their respective home states. Perth has the highest percentage of registered voters and electorates located in the metropolitan areas in its home state, Western Australia (Table 2). Melbourne had the next highest percentage of registered voters and electorates located in the metropolitan area, and are followed by Adelaide, Sydney and Brisbane (Table 2). Variations in the electorate composition and voter enrolments.
in Australia’s five largest cities highlight the importance of population distribution. Perth, Melbourne and Adelaide are clearly dominant in their respective home states, in terms of the presence of voters and electorates located in each of these cities. Sydney and Brisbane are not as dominant in their respective home states in terms of voter and electorate presence in these cities. This is a result of substantial urban populations outside of the major city, such as Newcastle and Wollongong in NSW and the Gold and Sunshine Coasts in QLD. Population distribution has some affect upon electorate composition and presence of registered voters in Australia’s five largest cities. This in turn affects the significance of these cities as ‘barometers’ of the electoral prospects of the various political participants.

Table 2: Enrolment figures and electorate composition in the five largest Australian cities, 2004 Federal Election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Home State</th>
<th>Total city enrolled voters</th>
<th>Total home state enrolled voters</th>
<th>% home state voters in enrolled city electorates</th>
<th>Total city electorates</th>
<th>Total home state electorates</th>
<th>% home state electorates located in city</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>2,333,057</td>
<td>4,329,115</td>
<td>53.89</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>56.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>2,225,757</td>
<td>3,309,800</td>
<td>67.25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>67.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brisbane</td>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>1,057,527</td>
<td>2,475,611</td>
<td>42.72</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>42.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perth</td>
<td>WA</td>
<td>912,536</td>
<td>1,248,732</td>
<td>73.08</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>73.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adelaide</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>671,524</td>
<td>1,051,923</td>
<td>63.84</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>58.44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Adelaide metropolitan electorates

The electoral performances of minor parties in Adelaide at federal and South Australian state elections held between 1997 and 2006 have produced a number of fluctuations in the electoral fortunes of these parties. The combined minor party primary vote increased slightly between the 1997 and 2002 elections before declining at the 2006 election (Figure 1). At the 1997 and 2002 elections, minor parties won over eighteen percent of the primary vote before decreasing at the 2006 election to 16.41 percent of the primary vote. A similar trend in the minor party primary vote in Adelaide was also evident at federal elections. At the 1998 and 2001 federal elections minor parties won approximately twenty percent of the primary vote. The minor party primary vote in Adelaide decreased sharply at the 2004 election to 12.38 percent of the primary vote (Figure 2). These fluctuations in the minor party primary vote in Adelaide were highlighted in the electoral performances of individual parties.

The Australian Democrats primary vote in Adelaide has sharply declined at both federal and South Australian state elections. The Democrats primary vote in Adelaide has fallen from 17.15 percent of the primary vote to at the 1997 election to 3.15 percent of the primary vote at the 2006 election (Figure 1). At the 1998 Federal Election, the Australian Democrats won 9.89 percent of the primary vote in Adelaide electorates. The Democrats primary vote peaked at 11.57 percent of the primary vote at the 2001 election before substantially declining to 1.91 percent of the primary vote at the 2004 election (Figure 2). The plummeting fortunes of the Democrats have not been helped through the impacts of internal party turmoil that has placed the party in a perilous state (Schumann, 2006, p.73). The collapse of the Democrats electoral support in Adelaide has provided openings for other parties to seize its political ground.

Family First has been able to establish a constituency in Adelaide electorates at the past two SA elections and the 2004 Federal Election. This has been achieved through the party’s efforts to establish and grow a constituency in Adelaide. Family First has increased its primary vote in Adelaide from 2.72 percent at the 2002 election to 5.62 percent at the 2006 election (Figure 1). Family First made an impressive debut performance at the 2004 Federal Election, winning 3.91 percent of the primary vote in Adelaide electorates. These electoral performances indicate that Adelaide is an important city for the prospects of Family First as a political participant at both state and federal elections.
The Greens are a political party that has become more firmly established in Adelaide electorates. This has been achieved through strong electoral performances in Adelaide at both state and federal elections. At state elections, the Greens increased their primary vote in Adelaide electorates from 0.30 percent at the 1997 election to 7.03 percent of the primary vote at the 2006 election (Figure 1). This trend of electoral support for the Greens in Adelaide was replicated at federal elections. At the 1998 election, the...
Greens won less than one percent of the primary vote in Adelaide electorates (Figure 2). The Greens primary vote has grown substantially at both the 2001 and 2004 Federal elections, with the party’s primary vote almost reaching six percent at the latter election (Figure 2). The Greens most likely have benefited from the decline in the Democrats electoral fortunes in Adelaide, claiming the political ground once occupied by the Democrats as a result of increased electoral support.

The trends in One Nation’s electoral fortunes in Adelaide have highlighted the fluctuations encountered by the party at both state and federal elections. One Nation’s primary vote in Adelaide was initially strong, accounting for 8.48 percent of the primary vote at the 1998 election. Subsequently, One Nation’s electoral support collapsed at both the 2001 and 2004 federal elections (Figure 2). This was highlighted at the 2004 Federal Election by the party winning 0.74 percent of the primary vote. One Nation’s electoral performances in Adelaide electorates at SA elections were limited, as the party achieved low primary vote figures at both the 2002 election (2.02%) and 2006 election (0.12%) (Figure 1). Clearly, One Nation demonstrated an inability to build its electoral presence in Adelaide due to its fluctuating electoral fortunes. Consequently, One Nation was unable to develop a solid constituency in Adelaide.

**Sydney metropolitan electorates**

The electoral trends that have developed in minor party electoral performances in Sydney metropolitan electorates highlight the challenges faced by these parties in the face of variable electoral prospects. The combined minor party vote at both state and federal elections in Sydney reflect the fluctuations in minor party electoral performances (Figures 3 & 4). At state elections, the combined minor party primary vote in Sydney electorates decreased from 19.20 percent at the 1999 election to 16.67 percent at the 2003 election (Figure 3). Similarly, the minor party primary vote in Sydney metropolitan electorates at federal elections declined from 18.39 percent of the primary vote at the 1998 election to 14.40 percent of the primary vote at the 2004 Federal Election (Figure 4). Fluctuations in the minor party primary vote were also reflected in the performances of individual parties. For instance, it is difficult to gauge much detail into Family First’s only electoral appearance in Sydney at the 2004 Federal Election. This is due to the party winning a miniscule 0.08 percent of the primary vote (Figure 4). However, for other minor parties, variations in their respective levels of electoral support show clearer trends.

**Figure 3:** Electoral performances of Australian Democrats, the Greens and One Nation and combined minor party vote in Sydney electorates, 1999 and 2003 New South Wales state elections.
The Australian Democrats are one political party that have experienced significant fluctuations in electoral support at state and federal elections in Sydney. The party’s primary vote in Sydney electorates declined from 4.12 percent at the 1999 election to 1.19 percent of the primary vote at the 2003 election (Figure 3). A similar trend emerged for the Democrats at federal elections. The Democrats won approximately five percent of the primary vote at both the 1998 and 2001 elections before declining to 1.26 percent of the primary vote at the 2004 election (Figure 4). These fluctuations in the Democrats electoral performances in Sydney highlight the precarious position faced by the party that has arisen from decreased electoral support.

The Greens have been one minor party in the Sydney electoral landscape that benefited from improved electoral performances at both state and federal elections. At state elections, the Greens managed to more than double their primary vote in Sydney electorates from 3.93 percent of the primary vote at the 1999 election to 8.81 percent of the primary vote at the 2003 election. The Greens have also managed to substantially increase its primary vote in Sydney electorates from 2.64 percent of the primary vote at the 1998 election to 8.68 percent at the 2004 election (Figure 4). The substantial growth in electoral support for the Greens suggests that the party may have capitalised upon the Democrats decreased primary vote and that the party has developed a solid constituency in Sydney metropolitan electorates.

![Figure 4: Electoral performances of Australian Democrats, Family First, the Greens and One Nation and combined minor party vote in Sydney electorates, 1998-2004 federal elections.](image)

In a similar vein to the Australian Democrats, One Nation experienced significant fluctuations in its electoral support in Sydney electorates at both state and federal elections. At the 1999 NSW State Election, One Nation won 5.86 percent of the primary vote. At the 2003 election, One Nation’s electoral support collapsed to 0.89 percent of the primary vote (Figure 3). One Nation’s electoral performance in Sydney was hampered by internal party turmoil in NSW that resulted in a party split and legal proceedings in the NSW Supreme Court regarding candidate preselection (Millar, 2002; Gibbs and Glendenning, 2003, p.4). At the federal level, One Nation won 6.84 percent of the primary vote in Sydney electorates at the 1998 election. However at subsequent elections, One Nation’s primary vote in Sydney electorates collapsed. At the 2001 Federal Election, One Nation won almost 3.61 percent of the primary vote whilst at the 2004 election; One Nation only won 1.05 percent of the primary vote (Figure 4). One Nation initially had strong electoral support in Sydney electorates at the early elections. However, factors such as internal party turmoil have contributed to the collapse in the party’s electoral fortunes in Sydney electorates.
Electoral geographies of minor parties in urban Australian electorates: the cases of Sydney and Adelaide

Developing a constituency is important for any political party to ensure their continued participation and prospects in a given electoral setting. Johnston and Pattie (2003, p.339) discussed the importance of constituency development for political parties, noting that ‘a party’s job is eased considerably if it is able to develop a large and loyal support base within the electorate, on which it can rely’. This is especially crucial in dynamic electoral landscape environments where political party electoral prospects can fluctuate from election to election. This is especially apparent for minor parties that face difficulties in sustaining themselves over time (Gerring, 2005, p.96). Examinations of minor party electoral performances in Sydney and Adelaide point towards distinct geographies of electoral support for individual parties at state and federal elections.

Australian Democrats

The electoral geography of electoral support for the Australian Democrats has indicated the importance of ‘postmaterialist’ voters to the party’s electoral prospects. ‘Postmaterialist’ voters have been described by Western and Tranter (2001) as voters concerned with societal rather than economic goals. The Democrats political platform of emphasising social issues would resonate strongly with these voters (e.g. G.Maddox, 2000, p.371; Stock, 2002, p.233). Profiles of the Democrats constituency point towards the party attracting support from the tertiary-educated, females, white collar workers, the non-religious and younger age groups (Bean, 1997, p.77; Forrest, 1995, p.570; Stock, 1997, p.203). In Adelaide, the geography of the party’s constituency has centred on Southern Adelaide, regarded as part of the Democrats ‘heartland’. At recent South Australian elections, the electorates of Bright, Davenport, Heysen, Napier and Waite have featured amongst the Democrats strongest performing electorates. At federal elections held between 1998 and 2004, the Democrats best performing electorates have included Boothby, Makin and Sturt. The geography of the Australian Democrats constituency in Sydney has followed a similar pattern to Adelaide through the importance of ‘postmaterialist’ voters. The Democrats constituency in Sydney has been strongest in Northern suburbs and inner city electorates. At the 1998 and 2001 federal elections, electorates such as Bradfield, Sydney, Mackellar, North Sydney and Grayndler featured amongst the party’s strongest performing electorates. At the 1999 NSW State Election, electorates such as Pittwater (11.74%), Ku-ring-gai (9.35%), Lane Cove (9.17%), North Shore (8.01%) and Marrickville (8.74%) featured amongst the Democrats best performing electorates. ‘Postmaterialist’ voters have been important for the party’s electoral prospects, although increased competition from rival political parties has meant that the Democrats cannot rely on these voters as a source of electoral support.

The geography of electoral support for the Democrats has also highlighted a number of weaknesses. In Sydney, the weakest electoral support for the Democrats occurred in Western and South-Western suburbs electorates. These electorates are generally consist of voters who are least likely to support the Democrats; most notably blue-collar workers and the lesser-educated. This is exemplified by the weakest performing electorates in Sydney for the Democrats at the 2001 Federal Election, which included Chifley (1.91%), Fowler (1.96%) and Macarthur (2.17%). At the 1999 NSW State Election, the Democrats recorded primary votes of less than two percent in the electorates of Bankstown (1.93%), Cabramatta (1.32%) and Fairfield (1.70%). Declining electoral support for the Australian Democrats has also contributed to weaknesses in the party’s candidate standings. This is best exemplified by differences in the party’s candidate standings in Sydney electorates at the 1999 and 2003 NSW State elections. In the 56 Sydney electorates, the Democrats fielded 51 candidates at the 1999 election and 43 candidates at the 2003 election. Reductions in electoral support and candidate standings for the Democrats indicate electoral support for the party has become increasingly vulnerable to fluctuations due to the loss of its core constituency.

Family First

The geography of Family First’s constituency has indicated the importance of religious organisations to the party’s electoral prospects. Family First’s electoral success in part can be attributed to the party’s links with the Assemblies of God churches, most notably Paradise in Adelaide’s North and Noarlunga in Adelaide’s South (Stock, 2002, p.559). Electorates located in close proximity to the Assemblies of God churches have been strongholds of electoral support for Family First. At the state level electorates such as Elizabeth/Little Para, Playford and Taylor in Northern Adelaide and Reynell, Mawson and Morialta in Southern Adelaide have been among Family First’s strongest performing electorates at the 2002 and
2006 South Australian elections. Family First has performed strongest in electorates where some semblance of a Christian constituency is apparent and voters who possess the desire to be economically aspirational (Lohrey, 2006). Similarly to the Adelaide context, Family First has also relied upon church support in Sydney. This support most notably came from the Hawkesbury Christian Life Centre which provided many of the party’s NSW candidates (Seccombe, 2004, p.11). However, Family First also encountered competition from a political party of similar ilk, the Christian Democrats, who have been long established in the NSW electoral landscape (M. Maddox, 2005). This has limited the ability of Family First to develop a constituency in Sydney electorates.

Whilst Family First has experienced some electoral success, the party has also encountered weaknesses in developing its constituency. Family First's electoral performances were weakest in electorates in close proximity to the Adelaide CBD, which have been more notably associated with the Democrats and the Greens constituencies. For example at the 2006 South Australian State Election, Family First won less than three percent of the primary vote in the electorates of Adelaide (2.67%), Norwood (2.57%) and Unley (2.51%). However, Family First's electoral performances in Sydney more clearly illustrate the challenges faced by the party. For example, in the eight Sydney electorates contested by both the Christian Democrats and Family First, the Christian Democrats outpolled Family First in seven electorates. The exception was the South-West Sydney electorate of Macarthur. There is a need to assess future electoral performances to determine whether Family First would be able to overcome some of the weaknesses the party has faced in its constituency development.

The Greens

The geography of electoral support for the Greens in both Adelaide and Sydney illustrates how the party’s constituency development has benefited from increased political momentum in both cities. This has been highlighted by the growth in the party’s primary vote at both state and federal elections in the period from 1997 until 2006. Inner city electorates have featured prominently in the Greens constituency in both cities. In Adelaide, the state electorates included Adelaide and Norwood and the federal electorates of Adelaide and Hindmarsh have featured prominently in the party’s constituency. In Sydney, the federal electorates of Sydney and Grayndler have been reliable sources of electoral support for the party. At the 2003 NSW State Election the Greens strongest performing electorates included Bligh (14.14%), Coogee (18.60%) and Port Jackson (28.85%). The Greens have also capitalised upon Australian Democrats declining electoral fortunes to build its constituency. This was achieved through recording strong primary votes in electorates where the Democrats have performed strongly at previous elections, most notably in Adelaide’s Southern suburbs and Sydney’s Northern suburbs. In Adelaide, this was evident in the Southern Adelaide electorates of Heysen (17.73%) and Davenport (11.38%) at the 2006 SA State Election. At the 2003 NSW State Election the Greens recorded their highest primary votes in Northern Sydney electorates such as Ku-ring-gai (12.48%), Lane Cove (15.63%) and Pittwater (14.08%). At the 2004 Federal Election the Greens best performing electorates in Northern Sydney were Bennelong (16.37%), Bradfield (11.45%), North Sydney (12.33%) and Warringah (11.81%). Clearly, the Greens were able to secure ‘postmaterialist’ voters, who were once part of the Democrats constituency. Improving electoral fortunes have enabled the Greens to develop its constituency in Adelaide and Sydney electorates where ‘postmaterialist’ voters are most likely to reside. These electorates have been integral to the expansion of the Greens electoral support.

The geography of the Greens electoral support has also indicated a number of weaknesses in both Adelaide and Sydney. A common feature of these weaknesses in both cities is evident through the Greens recording its lowest primary votes in outer suburban electorates. In Adelaide, the Greens weakest electoral support has occurred in the Northern Adelaide electorates where Family First has established its constituency. At the 2006 SA State Election these electorates included Playford (5.03%), Taylor (3.88%) and Wright (3.89%). In Sydney, the Greens recorded its lowest primary votes in Western and South Western Sydney electorates. At the 2004 Federal Election, the Greens won less than four percent of the primary vote in the electorates of Greenway (3.60%), Lindsay (3.49%) and Werriwa (3.13%). These electorates can be considered as electorates where the Greens were least likely to find their constituency, profiled by Wilson (2002, pp.21-22) as tertiary-educated, non-religious, younger age groups and middle-high income earners. The Greens clearly face challenges in outer suburban electorates in both Adelaide and Sydney in developing a constituency.
One Nation

The geography of One Nation’s electoral support in both Adelaide and Sydney has indicated that the party initially showed signs of strong constituency development prior to encountering declining electoral fortunes. Analyses of the geography of One Nation’s electoral performances in Australian cities have found that the party’s electoral support was strongest in outer suburban electorates and weakest in inner city electorates (e.g., Davis and Stimson, 1998; Smith, 2003). One Nation’s best performing electorates in Adelaide at the 1998 and 2001 federal elections in the electorates of Bonython and Makin. One Nation’s constituency has been strongest in Western and South Western Sydney electorates. For example, at the 1999 NSW State Election, One Nation won more than ten percent of the primary vote in the electorates of East Hills (10.60%) and Londonderry (11.15%). One Nation sought to establish its constituency in electorates where voters were most likely to be concerned about economic conditions (Western and Tranter, 2001, p.455). These concerns are most likely to be heightened in electorates where economic vulnerabilities are most likely to be encountered. The geography of electoral support for One Nation’s pointed towards the party seeking to capitalise upon economic disadvantage to establish its constituency.

The geography of One Nation’s electoral support in Adelaide and Sydney has encountered several weaknesses. These weaknesses have been brought about through limited electoral support in inner city electorates and declining electoral fortunes. In relation to inner city electorates, at the 2002 South Australian State Election, One Nation won less than one percent of the primary vote in Adelaide electorates such as Adelaide (0.70%), Bragg (0.83%) and Unley (0.82%). In Sydney, at the 1999 NSW State Election, One Nation recorded its lowest primary votes in the electorates of Coogee (2.38%), Canterbury (2.82%), Lane Cove (2.73%) and Port Jackson (1.83%). The impacts of One Nation’s declining electoral fortunes were also evident through reduced candidate standings. For example, at the 2002 South Australian State Election, One Nation only fielded candidates in three Adelaide electorates (Ashford, Newland and Port Adelaide). A similar trend also occurred in Sydney electorates. At state elections, One Nation fielded 55 candidates at the 1999 election in Sydney electorates and 24 candidates at the 2003 election. These weaknesses encountered by One Nation illustrate that the party was not strong enough to establish a secure electoral presence due to its declining electoral fortunes.

Conclusion: Can minor parties be barometers of electoral change in Australian cities?

Answering the question of whether minor parties can be ‘barometers’ of electoral change in Australian cities does not present any simple solution. It requires an understanding of how the prevailing electoral landscape conditions can influence minor party electoral performance. Overall, urban electorates are the most common electorate type found in Australia. In most of Australia’s five largest cities, with the notable exception of Brisbane, more than half the electorates and registered voters are located in the major city’s metropolitan area in their home state. In most instances, urban electorates should provide an indication of the electoral prospects of minor parties in respect to their primary vote, infrastructure and constituency. This is especially crucial for minor parties that seek to position themselves as alternative options to the major political parties. If urban electoral settings are important for electoral prospects, then they should provide a ‘barometer’ of how minor parties are placed in a dynamic electoral environment, dominated by fluctuating electoral fortunes.

The electoral landscapes of Sydney and Adelaide have provided numerous examples of how minor parties are affected by prevailing electoral landscape conditions. In the period from 1997 until 2006, this has been evident through fluctuating electoral fortunes for individual minor parties and a trend of a declining minor party primary vote at state and federal elections. Of the minor parties assessed in this paper, the Australian Democrats and One Nation have lost electoral support over time whilst the Greens and Family First have prospered, highlighted by growing primary votes and constituency bases. The experiences of minor parties in both Sydney and Adelaide demonstrate the extent that these parties can be ‘barometers’ of electoral change in Australian urban electoral landscape settings. The main outcomes of the electoral landscape conditions have been characterised by reductions in primary votes, candidate standings and participation of some minor parties and some voters changing their vote to support major party or independent candidates. Despite the fluctuations in electoral support experienced by minor parties, both Sydney and Adelaide, there appears to be a ‘core’ constituency on which minor parties can rely upon as a source of electoral support at state and federal elections.
Examining the Sydney and Adelaide electoral landscapes highlighted the importance of cities in the Australian electoral landscape and their impacts on the electoral fortunes of minor parties. Whilst research has been conducted on the electoral geography of urban Australian landscapes, there are many opportunities for further research. There are opportunities to explore conceptual frameworks to profile the urban Australian electoral landscape in more detail. Urban Australian electoral landscapes are dynamic. There are many instances where these dynamics indicate a ‘barometer’ of how the prevailing electoral landscape conditions affect minor party electoral performances. This paper has illustrated part of this picture through highlighting that minor parties are vulnerable to fluctuating electoral fortunes and face challenges in retaining their viability in urban Australian electoral settings. Further exploration of the Australian urban electoral landscape would be beneficial for highlighting how electoral trends manifest in urban areas and their ramifications for political participants.

References
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### Tables and figures


