



WHO VOTED GREEN? A REVIEW OF THE GREEN VOTE IN THE 2002 VICTORIAN STATE ELECTION

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In the 2002 Victorian State election the Greens achieved a 9.7 per cent vote for their Legislative Assembly candidates and 10.8 per cent for their Legislative Council candidates. These results far exceeded those of Green candidates in earlier State elections. This article examines the factors contributing to this performance and the prospects for any further advance in voter support for Greens candidates.

Results in recent elections have precipitated increasing interest in the impact of the Australian Greens on Australian politics. The West Australian Greens won five seats and the balance of power in the Upper House in the 2001 West Australian election, and the Greens also won four seats in the 2001 Tasmanian State election.¹ Swings to the Greens were recorded in all states in the 2001 Federal election, and two Greens candidates — Dr Bob Brown in Tasmania and Ms Kerry Nettle in New South Wales — were elected to the Australian Senate. Later, a Greens candidate was elected to sit in the House of Representatives following a by-election held for the historically safe Labor Federal seat of Cunningham.

These examples of Greens electoral success have accompanied the party's increasing prominence in the political debate. This process has been assisted by the major political parties taking similar positions on key issues such as border protection, inland security, and Australian participation in the international 'war on terrorism'. The internal divisions occurring in other minor parties such as the Australian Democrats and One Nation have also contributed. This has meant that the Greens have been able to articulate positions on these important issues usually in opposition to those taken by the major parties with little competition from any other minor party. Thus green politics has

become involved in a range of debates beyond environmental protection and nature conservation policy matters with which it tends to be popularly associated. In Senator Bob Brown the Greens have also had a readily identifiable, if not charismatic, parliamentary leader who has been able to articulate his party's approach to the national debate. As the *Melbourne Age* analysis concluded apropos the 'spectacular success' of the Greens in the 2001 Federal election where environmental issues were largely absent from the campaign:

The Greens' vote ... was in large part a result of the dominant and divisive issue of the campaign, the controversy over asylum seekers. Many Labor voters who were dismayed by their party's support for the government's tough stand on border protection registered their protest by casting their first preference vote for the Greens.²

The Greens won a strong primary vote in the 2002 Victorian election. This election was held some time after the Federal election, and the State campaign was focussed on local issues including some local conservation matters. Yet the message that the Victorian Greens took to the campaign resonated with the attack on the major parties that had characterised the Federal election, and Senator Brown was brought to Melbourne to assist in the transmission of this theme.³ The subsequent vote for the Greens was strong,

and, in one electoral division, was almost strong enough to secure a seat. This paper examines why the Greens enjoyed such a substantial swing in the 2002 Victorian election.

This paper also undertakes a spatial analysis of the green vote. This involves comparing the rate at which voters cast primary votes for Greens candidates with key socio-economic characteristics of the state's Legislative Assembly districts within which these votes were cast with a view to identifying what, if any, relationship exists. In so doing, the paper tests the hypothesis that a link exists between the 'middle class' and sympathy and support for green politics.⁴ The paper will show that such a link can be established, but that the term 'middle class' is too broad to accurately describe the constituencies that delivered the highest green primary vote. The paper will show that the strongest vote for the Greens occurred in a cluster of inner-urban electorates with one particularly striking socio-economic characteristic in common — specifically, a higher rate of concentration of voters with tertiary educational qualifications.

THE 2002 VICTORIAN ELECTION AND THE GREEN VOTE

The 2002 Victorian state election resulted in a land-slide victory for the Australian Labor Party — a rare enough occurrence in Victorian electoral history.⁵ The election saw the Bracks Labor Government, which had been a minority government since Labor's surprise win in the 1999 election,⁶ re-elected with a massive majority in the Legislative Assembly and a clear majority in the upper house, the Legislative Council. As Bennett has observed, Labor's landslide victory was won as a result of a record two party vote (57.8 per cent). The Liberal party primary vote of 33.9 per cent

was its lowest ever, and represented a fall of 8.3 per cent on its 1999 result. Interestingly, despite a 5.2 per cent swing, Labor's primary vote of 47.7 per cent was not a record. Labor actually won higher primary votes in the 1982 and 1985 elections.⁷

Notwithstanding this, the 2002 Victorian election was, as Costar and Campbell put it, a 'realignment election' in which one of the major political parties benefited from the collapse of voter support for the other.⁸ Any minor party performance in such a contest has to be assessed against this back-drop, for the fact that support for one of the major parties should collapse to such an extent provides scope for minor parties to enjoy levels of support not usually obtained in much closer contests between the major parties.

That Labor's primary vote in 2002 did not reach the same level as that obtained in their successful 1982 and 1985 elections was due to the impact of the Greens. The Greens won a swing of 8.5 per cent to achieve a state-wide primary vote of 9.7 per cent in the Legislative Assembly, and a 8.6 per cent swing to win 10.8 per cent of the state-wide primary vote for the Legislative Council.

It is possible to account for at least part of the swing to the Greens, by comparing candidacy rates (Table 1). The important figure to note here is the difference in the number of candidates put up by the Greens in 2002 (84 out of a possible 88 lower house contests, and all 22 Legislative Council provinces) with that of 1999 (22 candidates for the Assembly, and 4 for the Council).⁹ Also, as the table shows, no other minor party presented candidates to the same extent as the Greens. This was true of the Australian Democrats, arguably the Greens' greatest rival for the non-major party vote.¹⁰ By virtue of the spread of their candidates and the absence

Table 1: Victorian State election, 1999 and 2002 compared

Party	Share of Vote 2002	Swing on 1999	No. of candidates		
			1999	2002	Elected 2002
Legislative Assembly					
Australian Labor Party	47.9	2.3	88	88	62
Liberal Party	33.9	-8.3	88	88	17
National Party	4.3	-0.5	17	12	7
Australian Greens	9.7	8.5	22	84	0
Australian Democrats	0.2	-1.6	6	6	0
Other parties	0.6	0.1	34	28	0
Independents	3.4	-1.3	68	61	2
Legislative Council					
Australian Labor Party	47.4	5.2	20	22	17
Liberal Party	34.5	-5.1	22	22	3
National Party	4.3	-2.9	3	5	2
Australian Greens	10.8	8.6	4	22	0
Australian Democrats	1.7	-5	17	16	0
Other parties	0.2	-0.1	3	6	0
Independents	0.6	-0.6	8	4	0

Source: Victorian Electoral Commission Results of the 1999 Victorian State Election, 2000; Victorian Electoral Commission Report to the Parliament on the 2002 Victorian State Election, 2003

of minor party competition, the Greens were able to maximise their vote in this realigning contest.

Notwithstanding this, results in 12 Legislative Assembly districts saw the Greens achieve a primary vote in excess of 15 per cent. In four of these districts the Greens won primary votes in excess of 20 per cent. These included the inner city districts of Richmond (in which the Greens polled 28.6 per cent), Northcote (25.4 per cent), Brunswick (24.3 per cent) and Melbourne (24.2 per cent). Primary votes in excess of 20 per cent are noteworthy because, in majoritarian electoral systems such as that used in Victoria, candidates who achieve such a vote have a theoretical chance of winning the contest. As it was, Greens candidates in each of these four divisions outpolled the Liberal candidate, and in one seat — the division of Melbourne — the Greens candidate, Richard Di Natale, appeared to have an outside chance of victory. The discomfort Mr Di Natale caused sitting Labor MP Bronwyn Pike, and the fact that the other

three divisions in which the Greens vote was highest also happened to be safe Labor seats, led some commentators to conclude that the rise of the Greens had been at the expense of Labor.¹¹

A review of the swings that occurred in these four electorates qualifies this impression. As Table 2 indicates, the dramatic increase in primary vote for the Greens occurred alongside quite significant swings against both the Labor party and the Liberal party. In three divisions the swing to the Greens cannot be compared with the result obtained in 1999 due to a lack of candidacy.

Table 2: Victorian election 2002, swings on primary vote in inner-city Legislative Assembly electorates

Seat	% to ALP	% to LIB	% to GRN
Richmond	-7.3	-10.8	+28.6 *
Northcote	-11.0	-9.1	+25.4 *
Brunswick	-12.5	-10.2	+15.6
Melbourne	-18.4	-15.2	+24.3 *

* denotes no Greens candidate in this electorate in the 1999 election.

Source: Victorian Electoral Commission, 2003

Brunswick had a Greens candidate in the 1999 election, however, who won 8.7 per cent. The 15.6 per cent swing to the Greens in Brunswick occurred at the same time as the primary vote for the Labor candidate fell by 12.5 per cent, and the Liberal candidate by 10.2 per cent. In Richmond, meanwhile, the swing against the Liberal candidate (10.8 per cent) was greater than that for the Labor candidate (7.3 per cent). The swing against Labor in Melbourne was 18.4 per cent, although this was also due to the presence of an 'independent Labor' candidate who won 5.9 per cent of the vote. The swing against the Liberal candidate was 15.2 per cent.

The conclusion that the Greens impacted upon both the major political parties is supported by outcomes in the second raft of electoral divisions in which the Greens won between 15 to 20 per cent of the primary vote. Table 3 lists the eight Assembly divisions in which the Greens primary vote was between 15 and 20 per cent and compares the swings between the Greens and the major political parties. Here again the comparative lack of Greens candidacy in the 1999 contest is noteworthy, with the party fielding candidates in the previous election in only two of these seats. In 2002 voters in these seats took up the opportunity to vote for the Greens with some enthusiasm. The main feature of this table, however, is the extent of the swing against the Liberal party in each division. Unlike Table 2 where the swings against the major parties were roughly equal in proportion, in this list of divisions the swing against the Liberal party averages nearly 10 per cent and is much greater than the average swing against Labor. In two seats (Brighton and Monbulk) there were actually swings to the Labor candidate as well as to the Greens.

The data in these tables qualify claims that the rise of the Greens has been at the

Table 3: Victorian election 2002, swings on primary vote in Legislative Assembly electorates voting 15-20 per cent Green

Seat	% to ALP	% to LIB	% to GRN
Hawthorn	-1.8	-12.9	+19.8 *
Prahran	-1.7	-10.0	+11.1
Kew	-2.7	-12.2	+17.4 *
Albert Park	-7.8	-10.7	+17.3 *
Brighton	+8.1	-4.7	+15.9 *
Caulfield	-6.5	-9.4	+15.9 *
Monbulk	3.3	-12.4	+9.5
Box Hill	-1.9	-9.4	+15.7*

* denotes no Green candidate in this seat in 1999.
Source: Victorian Electoral Commission, 2003

expense of the Labor party. These tables show that both major parties lost ground to the Greens. Nevertheless, none of the divisions listed in Table 3 changed their representatives. These seats have a history of safe alignment to the Liberal party. Of the divisions listed in Table 3, however, two seats — Prahran and Monbulk — were won by Labor from the Liberal party. The distribution of Greens preferences assisted this change. Victorian Electoral Commission figures indicate that, where preferences were distributed in the count for individual seats, an average of 67 per cent of Greens preferences went to the ALP. In the contest for upper house provinces, Greens preferences helped Labor to win an historic majority in the Legislative Council. A case can be made for arguing that, despite the campaign waged by the Greens against Labor over asylum seekers and support for the Howard Government's engagement in the war in Iraq, the green vote actually caused more damage to the Liberal party.

A SPATIAL ANALYSIS OF VICTORIA'S GREEN VOTE

Commentators and party strategists tend to take a spatially-oriented approach to analysing Victorian elections and predicting election outcomes.¹² This approach understands the Victorian

electorate as comprising electoral divisions clustered as specific regional groupings. These regional groupings are then seen as being either safe for one or other of the major political parties, or as having a tradition of being areas of swinging marginal seats whose representational alignment helps determine which major party wins government. These groupings align with Victoria's socio-economic geography. Victoria is one of the more urbanised of the Australian states, and nearly 73 per cent of the state's voters live in metropolitan Melbourne. Regional and rural Victoria has historically been an electoral heartland for the Liberal and National parties, although Labor and independent candidates were very successful in this cluster of divisions in the 1999 and 2002 elections.¹³

The metropolitan electorate is also divisible into seats which are very safe for Labor, very safe for Liberal, or traditionally marginal. Here, too, geography plays a part. Melbourne's Yarra River has acted as a socio-economic and political divide. West of the Yarra River is Labor's electoral heartland with electoral divisions covering the so-called 'working class' northern and western suburbs. East of the Yarra are to be found a group of affluent inner suburbs that comprise some of the Liberal party's safest metropolitan electorates. Beyond the affluent inner-east are the outer-east and

south-eastern suburban growth corridors. Here are to be found marginal electorates with a track record of changing the party alignment of their representatives usually in line with the party persuasion of the government that will be formed at the conclusion of the count. The only major exception to this rule of thumb is a cluster of very safe Labor electorates covering the industrial suburb of Dandenong and suburbs such as Clayton and Springvale that are adjacent to a major migrant reception centre and are distinctive for their very high rate of overseas born residents.

Table 4 outlines some of the key indicative socio-economic characteristics of these regionally-based electoral clusters. The table shows the average percentage of the population in the cluster who are overseas born, who are professional or blue-collar workers, the average median family income earned, and the average percentage of university qualified residents per electoral division within the given clusters. The averaging of this data allows for variations that can occur within a broad cluster, such as the very big differences in socio-economic standing that exist between communities located particularly within the south-eastern suburban cluster, but also in the very broad 'regional-rural' category as well. This table indicates the relationship between the socio-economic distribution of Victoria's population and

Table 4: Average socio-economic characteristics of Assembly electorates by spatial cluster

Cluster	Overseas-born (%)	Median family income (\$)	Professional (%)	Trades and labour (%)	Tertiary qualified (%)
Western Suburbs	37.9	832.12	17.5	51.3	14.7
Northern Suburbs	30.6	865.46	26.6	31.6	21.7
Eastern Suburbs	26.3	998.05	31.8	24.1	27.8
South-Eastern Suburbs	30.9	874.86	28.2	30.0	23.5
Regional And Rural	10.5	667.76	28.4	33.8	13.9
State Total	24.7	812.00	18.3	30.9	16.2

Source: Victorian Electoral Commission *Information Kit for the 2002 Victorian State Election*, 2002

the typical voting behaviour patterns of the electoral divisions within which these communities live.¹⁴ Labor's strongest electoral performance occurs in electorates containing communities with higher percentages of residents who were born overseas, whose families earn lower levels of income, who are blue-collar employees, and who have secondary educational qualifications. The National party's electoral heartland is to be found in the Wimmera and the Mallee. The strongest Liberal electorates have a high percentage of professionals who earn higher levels of income, and who have university qualifications. On the edges of the metropolitan area are the growth corridors and, like the middle-to-outer eastern suburbs that were developed in the 1970s, these have a much more 'middle class' profile of home-buyers, young families, and white-collar employees or self-employed tradespeople. Here are to be found the swinging seats over whom the major parties battle in a bid to be able to form a government.

How did the 2002 green vote in Victoria impact upon these traditional spatial relationships? Within the 9.7 per cent state-wide primary vote for the Greens were some very definite spatial variations. The Greens' primary vote tended to be lowest in rural electorates, and the party's non-metropolitan primary vote (calculated by Bennett to be 7.7 per cent)¹⁵ was lower than the state-wide primary result. The Greens did not nominate candidates for four lower house districts covering the industrial outer western suburbs of Melbourne presumably on the assumption that this would not be the sort of electorate that would respond to the party's message (although the Greens did win 11.5 per cent of the vote in the

upper house province of Melbourne West within which some of these districts fall). Notwithstanding the absence of candidates in the industrial west, the Greens' performance improved markedly in the metropolitan electorate (Bennett calculates a primary vote of 10.9 per cent). A closer spatial analysis based on a traditional clustering of the results in north and western, eastern and south-eastern suburban seats (Table 5) confirms the metropolitan bias in the Green vote.

Table 5 shows that the strongest Green vote occurred in Labor's traditional north and western suburban electoral heartland. Within this cluster, however, were some major variations. The four strongest Green voting electorates were to be found in the north and western cluster, but, so, too, were some of the weaker Green-voting seats (Broadmeadows at 4.5 per cent, Mill Park at 6.2 per cent). A similar variation exists within the south-eastern suburban cluster where the best Greens performance occurred in the inner-city division of Albert Park (17.3 per cent) and the worst in outer metropolitan Narre Warren South (6.1 per cent). The Green vote was much more consistent in the eastern suburban corridor, however, with twelve out of the seventeen divisions in this cluster recording a vote for the Greens of 10 per cent or more. This spatial pattern is outlined in Figure 1 which maps the rate at which Melbourne's metropolitan electoral divisions voted for the Greens.

Do these spatial manifestations of the green vote correlate with any discernible socio-economic characteristics associated with Victoria's Assembly districts? With

Table 5: Average Greens vote per Assembly electorate by spatial cluster (%)

Western Suburbs	Northern Suburbs	Eastern Suburbs	South-Eastern Suburbs	Regional and Rural	State total
8.8	14.3	11.7	10.8	7.2	9.7

Source: Victorian Electoral Commission, 2003

one exception discussed below, the inner-urban green vote did not generally demonstrate a bias to any particular socio-economic characteristic. The 15 per cent-plus green-voting inner urban divisions have median family incomes in the middle-to-upper cohort, although seats like Richmond, Northcote and particularly Brunswick have a median family income at the lower end of this scale — a reflection, no doubt, of the socio-economic diversity of these divisions in which can be found high income-earning neighbourhoods existing alongside very low income earning areas. With a median age of 29-31 years the division of Melbourne is one of the youngest electorates in the state. The high green vote in this division might be suggestive of a causal link. However, the divisions of Kew and Hawthorn are much older electorates with median ages between 40 and 45 years, yet these were also strong Greens-voting divisions. Nor is there any readily identifiable correlation between the green vote and birthplace. The high green-voting inner-urban divisions all have an overseas-born (OSB) rate of between 20 to 40 per cent, and the only clear correlation to emerge from the overall metropolitan area was a link between the lowest rate of green voting in divisions with the highest rates of OSB residents.

The one exception to all of this is the distribution of persons with tertiary educational qualifications. Here the high green-voting electorates share a socio-economic characteristic in common — specifically, that they have higher-than-the-state percentage of tertiary educated persons. Indeed, the top ten electoral divisions in the state with the highest percentage of university-qualified persons (between 35 to 45 per cent) are clustered around the inner-west and inner-eastern electorates covering and

adjacent to the central business district. Mapping the distribution of tertiary qualified persons by electoral district (see Figure 2) shows that the university educated are concentrated in the inner-city and adjacent inner-urban electorates. This map also shows that the distribution of divisions with between 35 to 40 per cent (a total of 7 divisions) and between 25 to 35 per cent (a total of 14 divisions) of tertiary qualified persons transcends the notion of the Yarra River as social divide. Distance from the city centre appears to have more bearing on the spread of tertiary qualified persons rather than what side of the river they happen to be, with the percentage of persons holding tertiary qualifications falling the further out these divisions are from the inner-urban area.

A comparison of the map showing the rate of green voting by metropolitan division (Figure 1) with that showing the distribution of the percentage of persons who hold tertiary qualifications in these divisions (Figure 2) reveals a striking similarity. Both maps have the same spatial pattern in which the key characteristic (be it the primary vote cast for the Greens and/or the percentage of persons holding tertiary qualifications) has its highest manifestation in the central and inner-city districts, and starts to fall away as distance increases from the inner city. The fit is not perfect, but the strong similarity of the pattern does suggest a correlation between higher levels of green voting and a greater concentration of tertiary qualified residents. Even the distribution of mid-range green voting along the eastern suburban corridor and along the southern suburbs fronting Port Phillip Bay corresponds with the mid-range rates (15 to 25 per cent) at which residents in these divisions hold tertiary qualifications.

Here, then, emerge the key features of the green vote in the 2002 election: first,

Figure 1: The 2002 Green vote: Melbourne metropolitan Legislative Assembly electoral divisions

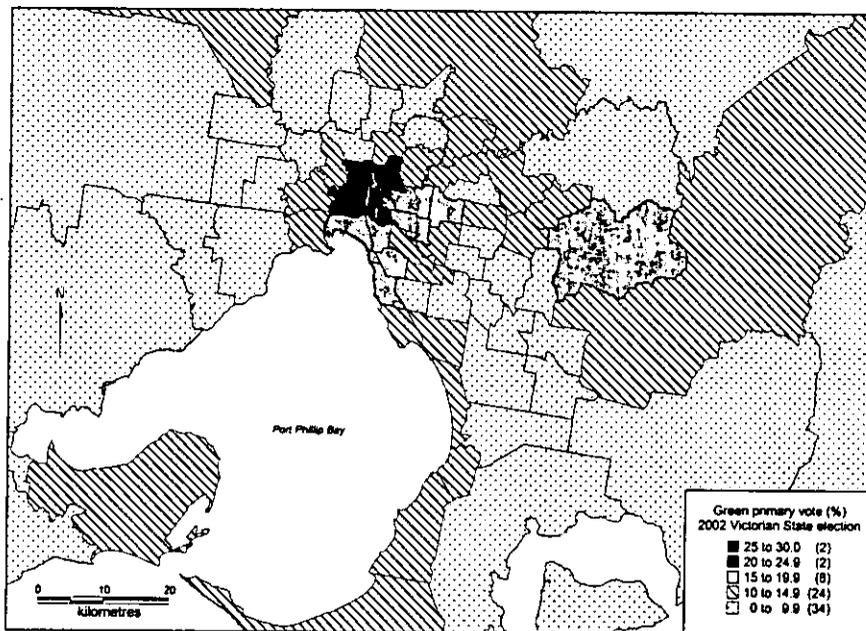
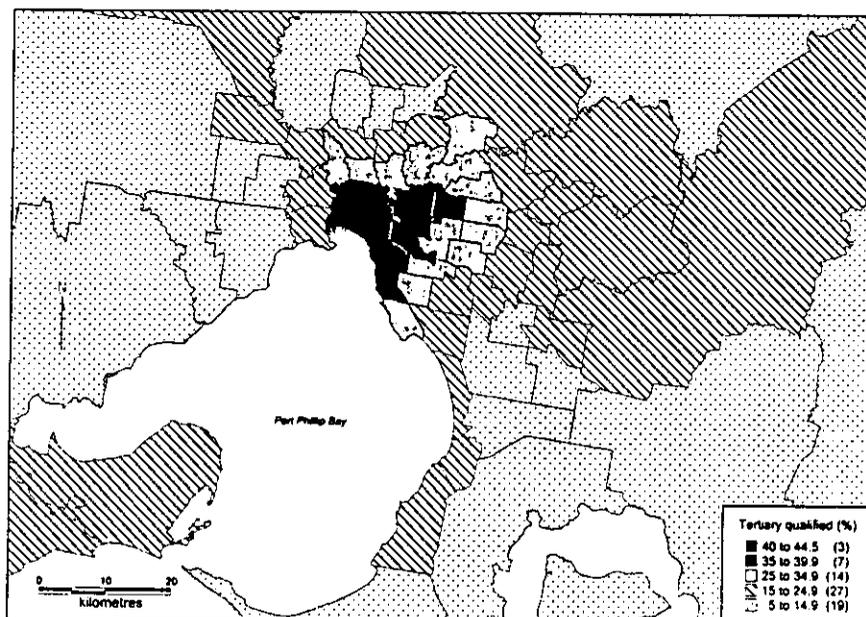


Figure 2: Percentage of tertiary-educated residents by Legislative Assembly electorates, Melbourne metropolitan area



the Greens polled well across all of the state's electorates, although the rate of primary voting for the Greens was greater in metropolitan divisions, and greater still further in inner-urban electorates. Second, the spatial pattern of the green vote corresponded with the distribution of tertiary-educated residents across Victoria's electoral divisions. Much public attention was drawn to the performance of Greens candidates in the four traditionally strong Labor inner-western urban divisions. It should be noted, however, that traditionally strong Liberal-voting inner city divisions also registered higher-than-average primary votes for the Greens. In this sense, the green vote transcended the old notion of the Yarra River being a socio-political divide between eastern and western metropolitan Melbourne. In relation to green voting, well-educated inner Melbourne on both sides of the Yarra behaved differently from outer-metropolitan Melbourne, and differently again from regional and rural Victoria. The stronger green vote registered in inner-Melbourne suggests the potential for the Greens to claim a core constituency whose dominant socio-economic characteristics includes higher levels of educational attainment and, by extension, higher levels of income.

WHY THE GREEN VOTE?

The high primary vote for the Greens in the 2002 Victorian election was partly due to the increased rate of green candidacy in an election in which major realignments of voter support occurred as part of a land-slide victory for one of the major political parties. In a 'de-aligning' election the Greens were able to perform a 'third party' role whereby voters could register a primary vote with someone other than a major party candidate simply by providing candidates in nearly every electoral

contest. This is a function that is usually performed in Australian politics by the Australian Democrats,¹⁶ but in the 2002 Victorian election the Democrats confined their candidacy to six Legislative Assembly districts.¹⁷

The Greens' role as a third-party alternative to the two-party system was probably more significant to its vote than the party's conservationist stance during the campaign. Having said this, it is true that conservation matters were relevant to the election. In a deliberate strategy to try to encourage the Greens to issue how-to-vote cards indicating a second preference to Labor, the Bracks Government made some pro-conservation commitments with regard to old-growth forestry logging.¹⁸ There was also a local conservation matter being debated in the south Gippsland region where residents opposed the proposal to link Victoria's power grid with Tasmania via an over-head transmission line. This matter may have accounted for a stronger-than-average green vote for rural divisions in the electorate of Gippsland South (11.7 per cent compared with a regional and rural average of 7.2 per cent). The power line controversy was a local matter, however, and did not impact on metropolitan voters. Forestry controversies do have a wider appeal. It might be presumed, however, that any urban elector contemplating casting a vote on the forestry issue would have voted for Labor's policy to ban old growth logging. The strength of the urban green vote suggests electors were motivated by issues other than forestry policy.

The relationship that existed between the strength of the primary vote cast for the Greens in inner-urban electorates and the concentration of tertiary qualified residents in these districts was one of the intriguing aspects of the green vote. Sympathy and

support for green politics is thought to be highest amongst voters sometimes classified as 'post-materialist'.¹⁹ The assumption is that post-materialists have achieved a certain degree of economic security and are thus able to pursue 'higher political wants'. These 'higher wants' resonate with agendas that might be considered as socially progressive or cosmopolitan.²⁰ In proposing this typology, Inglehart theorised that the post-materialist agenda would include interest in the arts, concern about the environment, and the pursuit of rights for minority groups.²¹ The cosmopolitanism of post-materialists derives from their ability to take a global perspective on issues and reflects the centrality of education (and especially higher education) to the formation of their values and in its role in providing them with the qualifications necessary to forge professional careers in government, education, the arts and other human-services oriented industries.²²

The spatial distribution of the socio-economic characteristics of the state's electoral divisions suggests that a core of divisions within which a post-materialist constituency might very well exist has formed in inner-metropolitan Melbourne. Post-materialist voter disillusionment with the major parties, particularly where they were perceived to have failed to adequately address some of the more prominent the social reform/cosmopolitan-oriented agenda items associated with post-materialism, would be a more likely explanation for the strong green vote in those inner city electorates in which this constituency has formed. A host of just such controversial issues that were raised during the preceding federal election campaign reverberated in the state election not least because the Greens raised them. This was particularly so when the party brought Senator Brown to Melbourne where he continued the campaign of opposition to the major party

consensus on asylum seekers and the 'war on terror'. Thus the Greens campaign continued the attack on the major parties' approach to asylum seekers and the 'war on terrorism'. In the traditional Labor-voting seats the Greens campaign also sought to target federal Labor's convergence with the Howard Government on these issues. The extent of the swing to the Greens indicates that this approach did indeed resonate within Melbourne's highly educated inner-city electorates.

VICTORIAN POLITICS: A GREEN FUTURE?

The Greens could be well satisfied with many aspects of their performance in the 2002 state election. The Greens certainly prompted Labor to make policy concessions to the conservation items on the green agenda. The Greens also helped Labor win majorities in both parliamentary houses, although they failed to win any seats themselves. Here the Greens were hampered by two things — first, the anti-minor party bias in the preferential voting system, and, second, the propensity for the strongest vote for the Greens to occur in historically safe-Labor or safe-Liberal electorates. A cosmopolitan post-materialist constituency might very well exist for the Greens to exploit, but it tends to be concentrated in urban areas that also have a history of being quite strongly polarised in their strong support for one or other of the major parties.

Electoral reform has been one of the consequences of Labor winning control (with the help of Greens preferences) of the Legislative Council. Regionally-based multi-member electorates and proportional representation are to be used to elect the upper house in the next state election which will be held in 2006. This new system will greatly enhance the ability of minor party candidates to win a seat in the Victorian

parliament particularly if they have a concentration of support within any of the new eight multi-member districts. The Greens stand ready to exploit this opportunity given the lack of any competition from other minor parties to fulfil a 'third party' role in future election contests. The concentration of a green-voting constituency in the inner city will enhance this opportunity. Under the new system the four inner-city electorates which returned the highest primary vote for the Greens will all fall within the newly created province currently known as Region 8.²³ The Greens will also receive nearly \$400,000 in public election campaign funding entitlements as a result of the vote it achieved in the 2002 contest.²⁴ What

remains to be seen is if the link between the strong inner city green vote and the notion of a post-materialist constituency aligning itself with a cosmopolitan-oriented anti major-party party can endure beyond the 2002 election. If the 2002 green vote was simply a protest at the way the major parties dealt with asylum-seekers and the 'war on terrorism', traditional voting alignments will probably be resumed in 2006. If, however, the 2002 result was the harbinger of a de-alignment of voter support away from the major parties particularly amongst a geographically concentrated socio-economic constituency, then the Greens may well be on the verge of becoming a parliamentary presence in Victorian politics.

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- ¹⁶ J. Tilby-Stock, 'The Australian democrats and other minor parties', in J. Summers, D. Woodward and A. Parkin (Eds), *Government, Politics, Power and Policy in Australia*, Longmans, Melbourne, 2002, pp. 226-227
- ¹⁷ The Democrats also contested 16 Legislative Council provinces. The Democrats' state-wide upper house vote was 1.8 per cent compared with its lower-house vote of 0.1 per cent — a stronger performance in the upper house, but still quite a way short of the Green performance.
- ¹⁸ *Geelong Advertiser*, 27 November 2002
- ¹⁹ E. Papadakis, *op. cit.*, p.15
- ²⁰ R. Inglehart, 'The changing structure of political cleavage in western society', in R. Dalton, S. Flanagan and P. Beck (Eds), *Electoral Change in Industrial Democracies: Realignment or Dealignment?*, Princeton University Press, 1984
- ²¹ R. Inglehart, *The Silent Revolution*, Princeton University Press, 1977
- ²² R. Inglehart, 'Post materialism in an environment of insecurity', *American Political Science Review*, no. 75, 1981, pp. 880-900
- ²³ The details of the new electoral system for the Legislative Council are contained in Victorian Constitution Commission, *A House for Our Future*, Government Printer, Melbourne, 2002, pp. 36-37.
- ²⁴ Victorian Electoral Commission, *Report to Parliament on the 2002 Victorian State Election*, Government Printer, Melbourne, 2003, p.18