



Australian Reddit Political Discussion Report: 2025 Federal Election Campaign

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1 Australian Reddit Barometer (Week 1 - Federal Election campaign)

This report summarizes political discussions among Australian users on Reddit during the 2025 Federal Election campaign. It is based on the synthesis of thousands of submissions and tens of thousands of comments from 20 politically active subreddits (/r/australian, /r/Adelaide, /r/AusEcon, /r/melbourne, /r/brisbane, /r/AusPublicService, /r/AusPol, /r/darwin, /r/hobart, /r/circlejerkaustralia, /r/WesternAustralia, /r/queensland, /r/canberra, /r/australia, /r/sydney, /r/perth, /r/AustralianPolitics, /r/aboriginal, /r/aus, /r/tasmania). The analysis identifies key political topic areas and assesses their prominence within the online discourse.

2 Theme: OTHER (27% of total)

Discussions surrounding the 2025 Australian Federal Election encompass a wide array of topics beyond specific policy areas, reflecting a diverse and often critical engagement with the political landscape. A dominant theme involves intense scrutiny of Opposition Leader Peter Dutton, frequently drawing comparisons to Donald Trump regarding leadership style, political tactics, and policy leanings, often expressed with significant disapproval. As one user stated, referencing a news headline: "Election 2025: Will Australia fall for Trumpism? Peter Dutton is learning from MAGA". This includes specific controversies like his preference for residing in Kirribilli House over The Lodge and his stance on public servants working from home. There is widespread commentary on the role and perceived bias of the media, with significant distrust directed towards Murdoch-owned outlets, but also critiques of the ABC and general media narratives shaping public opinion. Voters express considerable disillusionment and cynicism towards both major parties, citing a lack of trust, perceived corruption, the influence of corporate donations and lobbyists, and a feeling that politicians are out of touch with ordinary Australians. This sentiment fuels discussions about the potential and appeal of minor parties (like the Greens) and independents (including Teals), with strategic voting and the possibility of a hung parliament being frequent topics. The reliability and interpretation of political polling generate significant debate, with users analyzing results, questioning methodologies, and expressing skepticism about their predictive power. Specific government decisions and ongoing issues also spark considerable discussion, including the ethical and economic arguments surrounding the live animal export trade, the costs and benefits associated with the Brisbane Olympics, the need for truth in political advertising laws, and various issues impacting the Australian Public Service, such as restructuring and work-from-home policies. Furthermore, discussions touch upon election logistics, campaign conduct, social issues used in political discourse, and broader anxieties about the economy, national identity, and the influence of international politics on Australia.

2.1 Main Themes:

- **General Political Disillusionment and Cynicism** (187 submissions): A dominant theme is the pervasive lack of faith in the major political parties and the political system, often citing career politicians, perceived corruption, and disconnection from ordinary citizens. Exemplified by comments like: "Good. I've lost faith in our two party system. They're all career politicians who line their own pockets and go into consulting after. It's fucked!"
- **Media Bias and Influence Concerns** (127 submissions): Significant discussion revolves around the perceived bias of media outlets, particularly News Corp, and their influence on

political narratives and public opinion. Concerns are also raised about the objectivity of other outlets, including the ABC.

- **Role and Influence of Minor Parties and Independents** (103 submissions): Reflecting disillusionment with major parties, there's considerable discussion about the potential impact of minor parties (Greens, One Nation, etc.) and independent candidates (including 'Teals'), strategic voting, and the possibility of a hung parliament.
- **Critiques of Peter Dutton and Comparisons to Donald Trump** (82 submissions): Opposition Leader Peter Dutton is a frequent subject of discussion, often involving criticism of his policies, leadership style, and perceived alignment with Trump-like political tactics.
- **Influence of Political Donations and Lobbying** (49 submissions): Concerns are frequently expressed about the influence of corporate donations and lobbyists on political decision-making and the perceived erosion of democratic representation.
- **Political Polling Analysis and Skepticism** (16 submissions): Political polls are actively discussed and analyzed, but often met with skepticism regarding their accuracy, methodology, and predictive power.
- **Concerns about the Brisbane Olympics (Costs, Infrastructure, Sentiment)** (10 submissions): The upcoming Brisbane Olympics generate debate regarding costs, impact on infrastructure and housing, and general public enthusiasm versus perceived wastefulness.
- **Debate on Truth in Political Advertising Legislation** (8 submissions): There are calls for and discussions about the need for legislation to ensure truthfulness in political advertising campaigns.
- **Work From Home Policies (Political Context and Hypocrisy)** (7 submissions): Discussions arise around policies affecting public servants working from home, often linked to political figures and perceived hypocrisy.
- **Controversy and Ethical Debate around Live Animal Exports** (5 submissions): The live animal export trade, particularly the proposed ban on live sheep exports, sparks ethical and economic debates.

3 Theme: Economic Policy (20% of total)

Discussions surrounding the 2025 Australian Federal Election reflect significant economic anxiety among voters, dominated by the persistent cost of living crisis. Concerns about the affordability of essentials like groceries, energy, housing, and transport are widespread, fueling debate over the effectiveness of government policies. As one user expressed the prevailing fear: "Our country is in shambles with the cost of living, rental crisis, the poor are struggling so, so badly. I'm honestly terrified of what is going to happen, is life going to get harder then it already is?" Proposed tax reforms are a major point of contention, with debates contrasting the benefits of income tax cuts versus temporary measures like fuel excise reductions. Many question the fairness of tax policies, the impact of bracket creep, and the adequacy of taxes on corporations and wealth. Energy policy is another critical battleground, marked by arguments over the cost and reliability of transitioning to renewables versus maintaining fossil fuels, the potential impacts of nuclear energy, and the merits of gas reservation policies to lower domestic prices. The market power and pricing practices of the major supermarkets are under intense scrutiny, with widespread calls for regulation to address perceived price gouging and anti-competitive behavior, although skepticism remains about the feasibility and effectiveness of government intervention. Government spending, fiscal management, national debt, and the funding of large infrastructure projects (including cancelled events and defence deals) are frequently debated, alongside proposed cuts to the public service and the efficiency of government programs. The affordability and adequacy of public transport

investment are also discussed as part of the cost of living pressures. Overall, there's a strong sense of economic uncertainty and a desire for policies that provide tangible relief and long-term economic stability.

3.1 Main Themes:

- **Widespread concern over the rising cost of living impacting essentials like groceries, energy, and housing.** (178 submissions): This is the most dominant economic theme, reflecting deep anxiety about basic affordability.
- **Debates over tax policy, including income tax cuts, fuel excise changes, bracket creep, and potential wealth/corporate taxes.** (161 submissions): Significant focus on the structure and fairness of the tax system and proposed changes. One perspective noted: "Genuine income tax cuts are the only way to guarantee money in your pockets. Anything that involves cuts to excise and duties will always be absorbed by operators who capitalise on the higher profits opportunities."
- **Government spending, fiscal responsibility, national debt, and the economic impact of public service job cuts and infrastructure projects.** (92 submissions): Scrutiny of government financial management, debt levels, and the consequences of spending decisions, including potential public service cuts.
- **Contention over energy policy, including the cost and viability of renewables versus fossil fuels/nuclear, gas reservation, and impact on household bills.** (61 submissions): Energy policy is a key economic battleground, linking directly to household costs and broader economic strategy.
- **Concerns about supermarket pricing, potential price gouging, and the need for regulation of the duopoly.** (23 submissions): Strong public frustration directed at major supermarkets and calls for government intervention.
- **Discussion on the affordability and necessity of public transport investment as a cost of living measure.** (16 submissions): Public transport costs and service levels are discussed as part of the broader cost of living pressures.

4 Theme: National Security & Immigration (13% of total)

Discussions surrounding the 2025 Australian Federal Election reveal significant public focus on national security and immigration, often intertwined with domestic concerns. A dominant theme is the perceived impact of immigration levels on housing affordability and infrastructure capacity, with many participants arguing that high migration rates strain existing resources, exacerbate the housing crisis, and impact the cost of living. As one user bluntly put it: "Who cares, what I care about is the parties policy on immigration, its the single biggest issue effecting housing affordability and infrastructure in this country." Counterarguments highlight immigration's economic benefits, its necessity for workforce maintenance, and suggest that blaming migrants oversimplifies complex issues like inadequate housing construction and government policy failures. The type and skills of migrants are also debated, alongside concerns about the integration of new arrivals, the development of ethnic enclaves, and the potential for cultural clashes or racist attitudes, including specific concerns about views towards Aboriginal communities. Border security remains a key topic, encompassing policies on criminal deportation, anti-smuggling measures, and the management of asylum seekers arriving by boat. Debates occur around the effectiveness and ethics of offshore detention, the accuracy of migration data, and the government's ability to control migration

flows. Concerns about national security extend to foreign relations, particularly the AUKUS pact and Australia's alliances with the US and UK amidst rising tensions with China. Discussions involve the strategic implications of nuclear submarines, reliance on foreign military powers, potential threats from foreign espionage (like spy ships), the influence of foreign governments (US, China) on Australian policy and resources, and the need for increased defence spending versus neutrality. Community safety issues are frequently raised, including concerns about youth crime, the effectiveness of 'tough-on-crime' policies versus rehabilitation, and the perceived leniency or bias within the justice system. Police conduct, accountability, and militarization are debated, especially in incidents involving vulnerable individuals or minorities.

4.1 Main Themes:

- **Community Safety, Policing, and Justice System Concerns** (58 submissions): Discussions cover crime rates (especially youth crime), effectiveness of policing, sentencing, bail laws, and perceived issues within the justice system.
- **Racism, Xenophobia, and Immigrant Integration Challenges** (54 submissions): Debates touch upon societal attitudes towards immigrants, challenges of integration, cultural clashes, and accusations of racism related to immigration discussions.
- **Immigration's Impact on Housing and Infrastructure** (47 submissions): A significant portion of the discussion links high immigration levels directly to pressures on housing availability, affordability, and infrastructure capacity.
- **National Security, Defence Strategy, and Foreign Relations** (39 submissions): Topics include the AUKUS deal, relationships with the US and China, defence spending, nuclear submarines, and Australia's strategic positioning.
- **Border Security, Deportation, and Asylum Policies** (24 submissions): Focus on government policies regarding border control, deportation of non-citizens (particularly criminals), management of asylum seekers, and offshore detention.

5 Theme: Housing & Infrastructure (11% of total)

Discussions surrounding the 2025 Australian Federal Election reveal deep and widespread concern about housing affordability and infrastructure, forming a central point of voter anxiety. The inability to afford housing, whether buying or renting, is a dominant theme, with many participants expressing frustration and hopelessness, particularly younger generations who feel priced out of the market. "The younger generations are right to be enraged. Many of them have grown despondent and have no idea how they will ever be able to afford a home." This housing crisis is frequently linked to high levels of immigration, with many arguing that population growth is outstripping housing supply and straining existing infrastructure like transport, roads, and hospitals. However, others counter that factors like speculative investment, tax policies favoring investors (such as negative gearing and CGT discounts), restrictive zoning laws, NIMBYism preventing densification, and insufficient government action are the primary drivers of unaffordability, rather than immigration alone. There's significant debate regarding the effectiveness of government policies, including the Housing Australia Future Fund (HAFF), proposed foreign investment restrictions, and potential changes to lending standards, with skepticism about whether these measures adequately address the scale of the problem or simply inflate demand. Specific infrastructure projects are points of contention, including the Melbourne Airport Rail Link (MARL), the T2D tunnel project in Adelaide, and particularly the 2032 Brisbane Olympics, which sparks fears of exacerbated housing shortages and resource diversion. Concerns about the general state of infrastructure, including public

transport reliability and road congestion, are frequently voiced. The rental market is highlighted as particularly challenging, with rising costs and lack of security. Ultimately, there's a pervasive sense of frustration with both major political parties and a call for more substantial solutions.

5.1 Main Themes:

- **Housing Affordability Crisis & Generational Impact** (127 submissions): Overwhelming concern about the inability to afford housing (buying and renting), particularly impacting younger Australians and creating intergenerational tension.
- **Government Housing Policy: Criticism, Effectiveness & Political Division** (74 submissions): Significant debate and skepticism regarding the adequacy and impact of government housing policies (e.g., HAFV, tax settings like negative gearing), often accompanied by cynicism about political will due to politicians' property investments.
- **Housing Supply, Density & Development Challenges** (65 submissions): Discussions focus on the need for increased housing supply, debates around urban density, zoning laws, NIMBYism, and the challenges facing the construction industry.
- **Infrastructure Debates: Major Projects, Funding & Planning** (54 submissions): Discussions on specific large-scale infrastructure projects (e.g., MARL, T2D, Brisbane Olympics), their costs, benefits, funding models, and impact, alongside general concerns about transport and road infrastructure.
- **Immigration's Role in Housing Pressure & Infrastructure Strain** (47 submissions): A recurring theme linking population growth via immigration to increased demand for housing and strain on existing infrastructure.

6 Theme: Climate & Energy (7% of total)

Discussions surrounding the 2025 Australian Federal Election frequently center on climate and energy policy, revealing deep divisions and concerns. A major point of contention is the future energy mix, with fierce debate comparing the feasibility, cost, and timeline of the Coalition's proposed nuclear power plan against Labor's focus on accelerating renewable energy adoption. Skepticism abounds regarding the cost and practicality of nuclear energy in Australia ("Australia can't afford a large scale nuclear program, plus renewables projects, it can't be done. The energy providers are already investing in a renewables energy market. Australia will lose out of 100s of billions in investment if the switch is made to nuclear now."), while challenges persist for renewables, including grid integration, energy storage solutions like community batteries, and ensuring reliability. Gas policy is another significant battleground, focusing on domestic reservation schemes versus export commitments, the role of gas as a transition fuel, and its impact on energy prices and the environment. Environmental concerns are pervasive, encompassing habitat destruction, pollution, species protection, and the urgency of meeting climate targets. The cost of living impact of energy policies is a constant undercurrent, with users expressing frustration over high electricity and gas bills ("Gas powers electricity until we get 80 renewable so get to it PM. Electricity prices are OUT OF CONTROL and that fuels huge household bills as well manufacturing and SMEs. It's needed.") and questioning how different policy approaches will affect household expenses. Debates also extend to transport, particularly concerning vehicle emission standards and the transition to electric vehicles.

6.1 Main Themes:

- **Renewable Energy Implementation: Grid Integration, Storage & Reliability** (81 submissions): Focus on the practical challenges of transitioning to renewables, including upgrading the grid, developing storage solutions (batteries), and ensuring a stable energy supply.
- **Environmental Concerns: Habitat Destruction, Pollution & Climate Targets** (57 submissions): Broad environmental concerns including land clearing, mining impacts, pollution, biodiversity loss, and the need for stronger action to meet climate change goals.
- **Cost of Living & Energy Prices: Impact of Energy Policies on Households** (49 submissions): Direct link drawn between energy policy decisions (renewables, gas, nuclear, subsidies) and the high cost of electricity and gas for consumers.
- **Nuclear vs. Renewable Energy Debate: Cost, Feasibility & Timelines** (37 submissions): Significant debate comparing the merits, costs, environmental impacts, and timelines of pursuing nuclear power versus accelerating renewable energy development.
- **Gas Policy Debate: Reservation, Exports & Role as Transition Fuel** (30 submissions): Discussions centered on whether Australia should reserve more gas for domestic use to lower prices, the role of gas in the energy transition, and the environmental impact of gas extraction and use.
- **Electric Vehicles (EVs) & Fuel Excise Policy Debate** (18 submissions): Discussions concerning the adoption of electric vehicles, charging infrastructure, government incentives or taxes (like road user charges), and the future of fuel excise revenue.

7 Theme: Healthcare (6% of total)

Discussions surrounding healthcare in the context of the 2025 Australian Federal Election reveal significant public concern about accessibility, affordability, and the overall state of the system. A major focus is on Medicare, with widespread debate about declining bulk billing rates, the rising out-of-pocket costs for GP and specialist appointments, and calls for its expansion to include dental and comprehensive mental health services. The sentiment regarding affordability is often stark: "Do we have universal healthcare or not? No we don't. You can dress it up however you like, but we're regressing to US levels of healthcare." The affordability and accessibility of dental care is a particularly prominent issue, driving discussions about seeking treatment overseas and advocating for Medicare inclusion ("I don't have any advice, but fuck me we need to get dental into Medicare"). Mental healthcare access is another critical theme, with users highlighting insufficient rebates, long wait times, and the need for increased funding. The hospital system faces scrutiny, with numerous accounts of strained emergency departments and long wait times. Public versus private healthcare tensions, public health issues like vaccination, smoking/vaping policies, and specific funding initiatives (e.g., women's health) are also frequently debated.

7.1 Main Themes:

- **Medicare, Bulk Billing & Affordability** (26 submissions): Concerns about the declining availability of bulk billing, increasing out-of-pocket costs for GP and specialist visits, and the overall affordability of accessing healthcare services.
- **Hospital System Strain & Access (including EDs, Wait Times, Urgent Care)** (19 submissions): Reports and discussions about overcrowded emergency departments, long waiting lists for surgeries and specialists, ambulance ramping, and the perceived inadequacy of hospital resources.

- **Mental Healthcare Access & Funding** (17 submissions): Significant concern about the difficulty and cost of accessing mental health services, including long wait times for psychologists/psychiatrists and insufficient Medicare rebates.
- **Dental Care Accessibility & Inclusion in Medicare** (10 submissions): Strong calls for dental care to be included under Medicare due to high costs preventing access for many.
- **Vaccination & Public Health (Measles, Flu, Hesitancy)** (9 submissions): Discussions around vaccination rates, management of infectious disease outbreaks (like measles), vaccine hesitancy, and public health campaigns.
- **Smoking/Vaping Policy & Health Impacts** (9 submissions): Debates on government policies regarding tobacco and vaping, including taxes, regulations, black markets, and public health consequences.
- **Women's Health Initiatives & Access (Endometriosis, Abortion, Maternity)** (5 submissions): Discussion of specific funding for women's health conditions, access to reproductive healthcare, and maternity services, often highlighting historical underfunding.

8 Theme: Social Services (5% of total)

Discussions surrounding social services reveal significant public concern across several key areas. Welfare support systems, particularly Centrelink and the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), are frequently debated. The NDIS faces widespread criticism regarding its escalating costs and perceived potential for rorting ("NDIS costs 50 billion per year and growing fast. It's a rort. Needs to be scaled back by a factor of 10."), though its necessity is also acknowledged. Concerns persist about the adequacy of Centrelink payments like JobSeeker and pensions, with many feeling current rates are insufficient ("I was so disappointed that the labor party didn't increase benefits to the poverty level, if they did I could scrape by until I am able to work again."). The potential impact of public service job cuts on service delivery for agencies like Services Australia is a major anxiety. Homelessness and the adequacy of support services are recurring issues. Childcare accessibility and affordability remain critical concerns, with criticism of high costs and subsidies being absorbed by providers. Worker protections and rights, including wages and union roles, are another prominent topic.

8.1 Main Themes:

- **Welfare Payment Adequacy and Access (Centrelink/JobSeeker/Pensions)** (22 submissions): Concerns about the low level of support payments, complex eligibility criteria, partner income tests, and difficulties accessing Centrelink services.
- **NDIS Concerns (Cost, Rorting, Reform)** (15 submissions): Significant discussion about the sustainability, management, cost blowouts, and potential misuse of the National Disability Insurance Scheme, alongside calls for reform.
- **Homelessness and Housing Support Challenges** (14 submissions): Discussions highlighting the difficulties faced by homeless individuals in accessing shelter and support services, and the perceived inadequacy of the social safety net.
- **Public Sector Workforce and Service Delivery Concerns** (13 submissions): Anxiety about potential cuts to the public service and the resulting impact on the quality and timeliness of essential government services (e.g., Centrelink, Medicare, DVA).
- **Worker Rights, Wages, and Union Role** (9 submissions): Topics include fair wages, casualization, wage theft, the importance of unions in protecting workers, and Fair Work regulations.

- **Childcare Costs and Accessibility** (8 submissions): Frustration with the high cost of childcare, the effectiveness of subsidies, availability of places, and the impact on workforce participation, particularly for mothers.

9 Theme: Industry & Manufacturing (4% of total)

Discussions surrounding the 2025 Australian Federal Election frequently centre on the state and future of Australian industry and manufacturing. A strong desire exists among commentators for increased domestic production, encapsulated by calls for "Made in Australia" initiatives and greater self-sufficiency ("I hope it gives Australia a kick up the backside so we start building more things here instead of importing our needs.").

Concerns are raised about the decline of Australian manufacturing, attributed to factors like high energy costs and competition. The role of energy policy is a significant point of contention. Government initiatives like 'Future Made in Australia' are discussed, though skepticism exists. The management and beneficiation of Australia's natural resources are debated, with calls for more value-adding onshore ("What is the point of digging iron and coal from the ground, shipping it to China then buying it back as steel?"). The economic and social impacts of industry transitions, particularly the live sheep export ban, highlight tensions between animal welfare and economic impacts on regional communities.

9.1 Main Themes:

- **Desire for Increased Domestic Production and 'Made in Australia' Initiatives** (36 submissions): Strong sentiment favouring greater national self-sufficiency, supporting local businesses, and revitalizing domestic manufacturing.
- **Debate on Resource Management, Value-Adding, and Foreign Ownership** (17 submissions): Discussions on how Australia manages its natural resources (minerals, gas), the need for more onshore processing, resource taxation, and concerns about foreign ownership/control.
- **Concern over Decline of Australian Manufacturing and Reliance on Imports** (12 submissions): Lamenting the perceived hollowing out of the manufacturing sector and the country's dependence on imported goods.
- **Role of Government Initiatives (e.g., 'Future Made in Australia', AUKUS) in Industry Development** (10 submissions): Analysis and debate surrounding government policies aimed at boosting specific industries, including green technology, defence, and general manufacturing.
- **Economic and Social Impacts of the Live Sheep Export Ban** (9 submissions): Focused debate on the consequences of phasing out the live sheep export trade, weighing animal welfare concerns against the economic impact on farmers and related industries.
- **Impact of Energy Costs and Policy on Manufacturing Competitiveness** (6 submissions): Concerns that high energy prices are hindering the competitiveness of Australian industry and manufacturing.

10 Theme: Education & Skills (2% of total)

Discussions surrounding education and skills reveal public interest in policies affecting accessibility and quality. Tertiary education affordability is a major focus, with debates on HECS/HELP debt ("I almost died when I did the hecs application for my honours degree. \$40,000 for 1 year."), Fee-Free TAFE, and postgraduate costs. Concerns are raised

about university funding models and reliance on international students. At the school level, funding for public education is critical, with discussions on achieving adequate funding standards ("Just 1.3 per cent of public schools are adequately funded. Whereas 98 per cent of private schools are over-funded...") and disparities between public and private schools. Curriculum content sparks debate. The challenges facing the teaching profession, including workload, pay, and retention, are highlighted. Early childhood education access, affordability, and quality are also recognized as crucial. Overall, there's a strong sentiment for investment across all education levels.

10.1 Main Themes:

- **Student Debt & Tertiary Affordability** (18 submissions): Significant concern regarding the cost of university and vocational education, focusing on HECS/HELP debt levels, indexation, and the cost of degrees.
- **Public School Funding & Resources** (17 submissions): Debates centered on the adequacy of funding for public schools compared to private schools, adherence to Gonski/SRS standards, and the impact on resources and educational outcomes.
- **Challenges in the Teaching Profession & School Environment** (6 submissions): Discussions about teacher shortages, high turnover rates, workload, pay, safety concerns (violence, bullying), and training quality.
- **Early Childhood Education Access & Quality** (6 submissions): Focus on the importance, cost, accessibility, and quality of early learning and childcare services.
- **Role and Impact of International Students** (4 submissions): Discussions on the financial reliance of universities on international student fees and the potential impacts on educational standards, resources, and campus culture.

11 Conclusion: What Australian Redditors are Thinking

The political discourse on Australian Reddit in the lead-up to the hypothetical 2025 Federal Election is dominated by **deep economic anxiety**, particularly concerning the **cost of living** and **housing affordability**. These issues permeate discussions across multiple themes, reflecting widespread hardship and frustration with the perceived inability of successive governments to provide effective solutions. Alongside these material concerns, there is a powerful undercurrent of **political disillusionment and cynicism**. Trust in major parties (ALP and LNP) and political figures, notably Opposition Leader Peter Dutton, appears low, fueling interest in minor parties and independents, and skepticism towards political processes and media narratives, especially those from News Corp outlets.

Key themes prominent in Reddit discussions include:

1. **Cost of Living Crisis:** Pervasive concern about the affordability of groceries, energy, transport, and daily essentials.
2. **Housing Unaffordability:** Intense focus on the inability to buy or rent affordably, impacting younger generations severely.
3. **Political Disillusionment & Trust:** Widespread cynicism towards politicians, major parties, and the political system, including concerns about donations and lobbying.
4. **Critiques of Political Leadership:** Significant scrutiny and criticism directed at political leaders, particularly Peter Dutton.
5. **Media Bias:** Strong distrust of mainstream media, especially Murdoch outlets, and its perceived influence.

6. **Immigration Levels:** Heated debate linking immigration rates to pressures on housing, infrastructure, and cost of living, alongside concerns about integration and racism.
7. **Energy Policy & Transition:** Divisive debates on the future energy mix (nuclear vs. renewables), energy costs, and climate action urgency.
8. **Healthcare Access & Affordability:** Concerns about Medicare sustainability (especially bulk billing), dental care costs, and mental health service gaps.

Comparison with Party Manifestos:

There are both alignments and significant disconnects between the themes dominating Reddit discussions and the stated priorities in the major party manifestos:

- **Alignment:**

- **Cost of Living:** All major parties address cost of living pressures (ALP/LNP via tax cuts/relief, Greens via supermarket regulation/transport). This aligns directly with Redditors' primary concern.
- **Housing:** All parties propose measures to address housing (ALP's building target/Help-to-Buy, LNP's migration/foreign investment focus, Greens' rent control/public developer). This reflects the high priority given to housing by Redditors.
- **Healthcare:** All parties promise Medicare enhancements (bulk billing, GPs), aligning with Reddit concerns about access and affordability. ALP's urgent care clinics and Greens' push for dental in Medicare also resonate with specific points raised.
- **Energy:** The distinct approaches (ALP renewables target, LNP nuclear/gas, Greens anti-fossil fuel/public renewables) reflect the different sides of the intense energy debate seen on Reddit.
- **Education:** ALP's focus on Free TAFE and student debt reduction, and the Greens' more radical debt elimination/free education proposals, address affordability concerns raised on Reddit.

- **Disconnects & Nuances:**

- **Depth of Disillusionment:** While parties campaign on promises, the profound level of cynicism, distrust in the political class, and focus on integrity issues (donations, lobbying, truth in advertising) seen on Reddit seems largely unaddressed in manifestos. The strong focus on media bias is also absent from party platforms.
- **Intensity of Cost of Living/Housing Anxiety:** While policies exist, the sheer *intensity* and pervasiveness of anxiety about basic survival costs and being locked out of housing, as expressed on Reddit, may not be fully captured or matched by the scale of proposed solutions.
- **Immigration Framing:** While the LNP explicitly links reduced migration to easing housing pressure (a common Reddit theme), the broader, often more heated and complex debate on Reddit regarding immigration's multifaceted impacts (economic, social, infrastructure) versus policy failures is more nuanced than manifesto points.
- **Supermarket Regulation:** While the Greens directly target the supermarket duopoly (a specific Reddit frustration), the LNP's broader "anti-competitive behaviour" framing is less direct.
- **Nuclear Debate:** The LNP's push for nuclear energy is a clear policy, but the significant skepticism and debate regarding its cost and feasibility on Reddit highlight a potential disconnect with public acceptance.
- **'Made in Australia':** While ALP promotes this, the underlying Reddit discussion often includes skepticism about effectiveness and concerns about genuine support versus rhetoric, reflecting a trust gap.
- **Specific Controversies:** Issues like the Brisbane Olympics costs or Dutton's resi-

dency choices, while generating significant online discussion, are naturally absent from formal policy platforms.

In summary, while party manifestos address many of the core policy areas concerning Australian Redditors (economy, housing, health), there appears to be a significant gap between the proposed political solutions and the depth of public anxiety, cynicism, and specific frustrations articulated in these online spaces. The intense focus on political trust, leadership figures, media influence, and the perceived failures of the system itself represent major themes in the Reddit discourse that extend beyond the typical scope of election policy promises.

12 Notes

The findings in this report were synthesized using AI models, including Google Gemini Flash and Gemini Pro.

12.1 Acknowledgement

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¹<https://internetobservatory.org.au/>

²<https://www.education.gov.au/national-research-infrastructure>