

## An Australian republic? Attenders' attitudes

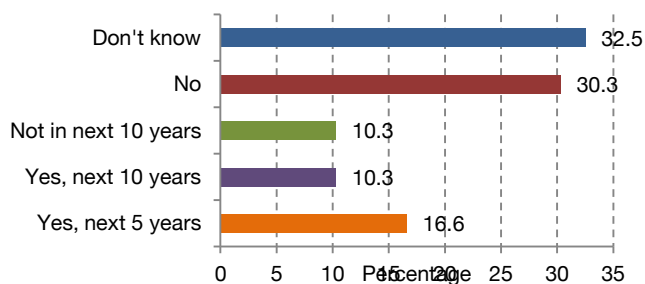
### General attitudes towards an Australian Republic

Indications are that public support for Australia becoming a republic has declined. In 1999, the year of the unsuccessful referendum<sup>1</sup> on Australia becoming a republic, support for a republic among the general population was at 51%<sup>2</sup>. By 2011, support had fallen to 41%<sup>3</sup>, a decline of 10% in 12 years.

### What do attenders think?

When asked in the 2011 NCLS: "Should Australia become a republic?", 27% of all church attenders thought that Australia should become a republic within the next 10 years, with 17% wanting a republic within five years (see Figure 1). Some 10% thought Australia should become a republic but not in the next 10 years. Support for a republic among church attenders was therefore approximately 4% lower than among the general population. Thirty percent of all church attenders did not think that Australia should become a republic, and 33% did not know either way.

**Figure 1: Church attenders' views on a republic**



Source: 2011 NCLS Attender Sample Survey N v2 (n=1,426).

<sup>1</sup> The question asked in the 1999 referendum was "To alter the Constitution to establish the Commonwealth of Australia as a republic with the Queen and the Governor-General being replaced by a President appointed by a two-thirds majority of the members of the Commonwealth Parliament"  
[http://www.aec.gov.au/elections/referendums/1999\\_Referendum\\_Rep\\_orts\\_Statistics/1999.htm](http://www.aec.gov.au/elections/referendums/1999_Referendum_Rep_orts_Statistics/1999.htm), accessed 8 November 2012.

<sup>2</sup> Newspoll : *Becoming a Republic*  
<http://resources.news.com.au/files/2011/04/24/1226044/215274-aus-news-file-newspoll-110425.pdf>, accessed 9 November 2012. The question wording was "Are you in favour of or against Australia becoming a republic? If in favour, is that strongly in favour or partly in favour? If against, is that strongly against or partly against?"

<sup>3</sup> ibid

### How does age affect the view?

As shown in Table 1, the biggest supporters of an Australian republic were the older generations (people aged 50 and over). The lowest level of support was found among those in the age range 20-29 (11% supported a republic in the next 10 years), with slightly higher support from those in the 15-19 age range (19%). As well as being more supportive of a republic than younger attenders, older attenders were also more opposed. The explanation for this is that older people were much firmer in their views than younger people, with a decline in the 'don't know' response from almost 60% of attenders under 30 years of age to less than 20% of those aged 70+. The issue of an Australian republic is just not "on the radar" for many young church attenders.

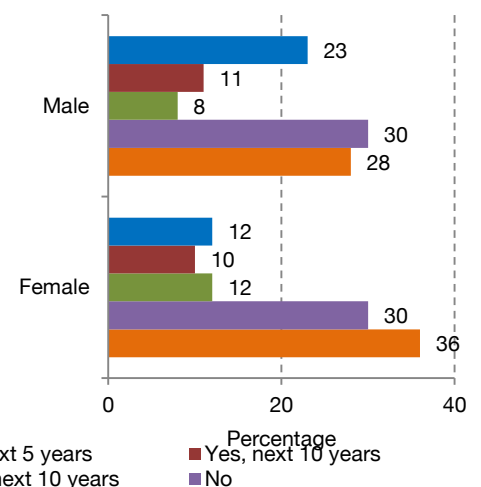
**Table 1: Views on Australian republic by age**

	15-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80+
	Percentage							
Yes, next 5 yrs	7	6	16	19	21	15	19	20
Yes, next 10 yrs	12	5	5	9	10	14	12	7
Not in next 10 yrs	3	5	7	6	12	12	16	15
No	20	23	27	24	30	35	37	41
Don't know	58	59	45	42	28	23	16	17

Source: 2011 NCLS Attender Sample Survey N v2 (n=1,414).

### What about gender?

**Figure 2: Church attenders' views on a republic**



Source: 2011 NCLS Attender Sample Survey N v2 (n=1,390).

Among church attenders, considerably more men (34%) than women (22%) supported Australia becoming a republic in the next 10 years (see Figure 2). Of the men supporting an Australian republic, the majority (23%) wanted a republic by 2016. This tendency for church attending men to favour a republic more so than women, is consistent with the general population where 49% of men and 34% of women were found to be in favour of an Australian republic in 2011.

### Do attitudes differ by denomination?

Reviewing denominational results, the biggest supporters of an Australian republic within 10 years are attenders from Catholic (30%) and Uniting (28%) churches (see Table 2). The lowest support was among Lutheran attenders (20%), 'Other Protestants' (22%) and Baptist/Churches of Christ attenders (22%). Pentecostal attenders were the most likely to select 'don't know'.

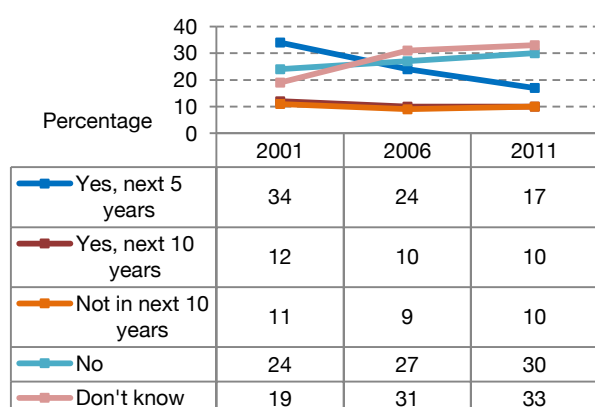
**Table 2: Views on Australian republic by denomination**

	Angli- can	Baptist/ Church- es of Christ	Cath- olic	Luth- eran	Pente- costal	Unit- ing	Other Prot- estant
	Percentage						
Yes, next 5 years	12	15	20	11	13	13	13
Yes, next 10 years	12	7	10	9	11	15	9
Not in next 10 years	15	10	10	10	6	16	8
No	43	29	26	41	27	30	42
Don't know	19	39	34	29	43	25	28

Source: 2011 NCLS Attender Sample Survey N v2 (n=1,426).

### Change over time

**Figure 3: Church attenders' views on a republic, 2001-2011**



Source: 2011 NCLS Attender Sample Survey N v2 (n=1,426), 2006 Attender Sample Survey J (n=2,469), 2001 NCLS Attender Sample Survey N (n=2,231)

As shown in Figure 3, the proportion of church attenders in favour of an Australian republic in the next

five years steadily declined between 2001 (34%) and 2011 (17%). In contrast, the proportion of church attenders not in favour rose from 24% in 2001 to 30% in 2011. This mirrors the trend observed among the general population. There was also a sizeable increase in the proportion of attenders indicating they don't know (19% in 2001, 31% in 2006, and then 33% in 2011).

### Summary

In 2011, opinions were mixed as to whether Australia should become a republic. Attitudes varied as a function of age, gender, and denomination. The support for a republic decreased among attenders between 2001 and 2011.

### Data sources

Castle, K., (2001) [computer file], 2001 NCLS Attender Sample Survey N. Sydney, Australia: NCLS Research.

Castle, K., (2006) [computer file], 2006 NCLS Attender Sample Survey J. Sydney, Australia: NCLS Research.

Powell, R., (2014) [computer file], 2011 NCLS Attender Sample Survey N v2. Sydney, Australia: NCLS Research.

### Citation

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