

The two polls we're looking at are:

1. This [News.com.au](#) report of a RedBridge poll, predicting an Allegra Spender win in Wentworth with a two-party preferred vote of 53-47. Methodology [here](#).
2. This [uComms poll of Kooyong](#) which has Monique Ryan winning at 59-41 on two-party preferred basis.

Interested in your thoughts on these polls, whether they can be trusted and any potential problems with the media relying on those figures.

Comment from Kevin Bonham, polling analyst:

Concerning poll 1, while Redbridge has a lot of experience in doing internal polls, until recently it has not been doing public polling and therefore there has been no public test (based on polls openly published prior to elections that can be compared with results) of how accurate it is or isn't prior to now. Some Redbridge polls produce results that appear curious, including in this case having a United Australia Party vote that is around ten times what the party received in the same seat in 2019. This is probably partly because Redbridge does not use the full list of contesting parties.

At this stage I have not seen any information on how the two-candidate preferred vote of 53-47 was calculated. It may be an estimate by the pollster or it may be based on asking the respondents, but I have seen no evidence the latter method was used and in any case it is an unreliable method. My own estimate if those numbers occurred on election day would be 51-49 to Spender, though this assumes the UAP vote is really as high as claimed. Given the estimated margin of error of the poll, and the time remaining til polling day, it really only finds that Spender is competitive; it should not be taken as a strong prediction of a Spender win.

The article makes some claims that are not quite correct. The poll does not find that "less than 2 per cent of voters believe trans women in sport is a big issue"; it finds that less than 2 per cent believe it is *the biggest* issue. The poll report does not provide any evidence that "political candidates attacking trans women, gays and lesbians lose twice as many voters as they gain,"; it finds that many more voters say they are less likely to vote for a candidate who expresses such views than say they are more likely to do so, but it does not quantify how much less likely.

Also this kind of polling where a voter is asked how a single issue would affect their vote in isolation is unrealistic as it makes that issue more prominent in the voter's mind at the time they are answering the poll than it normally would be. Such polling almost always finds that voters say an issue would affect their vote even if the issue is obviously obscure. It is obviously not likely that 50% of voters would change their vote over issues that only a few percent rate as the most important.

(Pedantic note: for a contest between a Liberal and an Independent, the term "two-party preferred vote" is not correct and the correct term is "two-candidate preferred vote". A two-party preferred vote is the breakdown of votes between Labor and the leading Coalition party in a seat only, whether or not those parties are the final two.)

Concerning poll 2, this poll is by uComms which has had a variable record in polling, including some rather accurate results but also some very inaccurate results. For instance a statewide uComms in the 2021 Tasmanian state election underestimated the Liberals by around 7 points. A seat poll of the SA state seat of Stuart, albeit taken several weeks out from the election, underestimated independent Geoff Brock by around 30 points. uComms uses weighting by only age and gender, which is a very simplistic form of weighting, and which ignores the problems experienced at the 2019 election, to which over-sampling of highly-educated and politically engaged voters (without due correction) appear to have contributed.

A further issue is that this poll was commissioned by a candidate, and is therefore internal polling similar to polling taken for political parties. Decisions on whether to release internal polling are prone to cherry-picking. Parties or campaign groups may choose to release their best polls without releasing ones that are bad for them, so we have no way of knowing if the sample is representative of what the parties or campaign groups are seeing. It appears that a substantial body of polling is being undertaken on behalf of "teal independent" candidates but most of it is not being released.

I have still not seen full primary vote results for this poll. On the limited primary vote results I have seen, the 59% to Ryan looks higher than expected, but she would win easily if the primary vote numbers were accurate (perhaps 56% or 57% two candidate preferred). Given the size of recent seat poll errors, it is still possible for even a poll with this margin to have the wrong winner.