

April 24 2025

DORIAN VON FREYHOLD, MANAGING PARTNER AT COMPASS POLLING

Dear Media Watch team,

Thank you for your inquiry regarding the Compass Polling survey conducted in the seat of McMahon.

We'd like to clarify the context, purpose, and safeguards associated with this survey:

1. Voter Verification and Geolocation

The survey link was distributed via SMS to mobile numbers identified and validated to be in McMahon by a third-party provider. While we did not require respondents to validate enrolment, electorate relevance was ensured through external geographic verification and self-identification.

2. Response Validation and Duplicate Protection

Each response was mapped back to the associated mobile phone number used for delivery. This makes multiple completes from the same contact impossible, and ensures one unique response per voter.

3. Candidate Listing and Question Structure

The survey included key candidates by name to reflect current campaign visibility. Both the intended vote and the 2022 federal vote were asked using the same structure. Notably, the 2022 results were consistent with published outcomes and were not distorted by the question type, which supports the reliability of the method.

4. Candidate and Party Reference

At the time the survey was released, not all nominations had closed. The intent was to gauge recognition and support across the most visible and likely candidates based on the prevailing campaign environment.

5. Sample Bias and Weighting

While this was an opt-in survey, Compass Polling applied standard post-collection weighting. The sample was reweighted by age, gender, income, and 2022 vote to align with electorate benchmarks and minimise bias.

Some of these variables are sourced from our centralised consumer database, while others were elicited during the survey itself, allowing for robust adjustments to sample composition. This is consistent with professional practice in hybrid-mode and non-probability polling.

6. Methodological Transparency

We distinguish clearly between campaign-level sentiment surveys like this and formal, published polling. We are always willing to share our methodology upon request and apply consistent internal standards to ensure research integrity.

7. Independent Validation

Since this survey was conducted, reputable polling firms engaged by major political parties have independently replicated the core findings—validating that Chris Bowen faces serious voter disaffection in McMahon.

In addition, on-the-ground reporting and interviews by journalists from major media outlets have echoed similar themes, reinforcing what our data highlighted early: there is a genuine shift in sentiment among local voters.

8. Funding and Independence

This poll was not commissioned by independent candidate Matthew Camenzuli or any political party. It was conducted as an independently funded polling endeavour by Compass Polling, as part of our broader effort to explore voter sentiment and democratic engagement in key seats.

9. Regarding Claims of External Review

We note the suggestion that “a number of experienced pollsters” were shown the survey and questioned its reliability. We respectfully submit that no credible pollster could reasonably assess the reliability of the findings without access to the full methodology, response cleaning protocols, weighting procedures, and underlying data. When these elements are properly considered, the survey aligns with accepted standards for campaign-level sentiment research and has since been validated by both industry peers and the lived reality observed on the ground.

Compass Polling takes both accuracy and transparency seriously. Please feel free to reach out if you would like to speak directly or review our approach in more detail.

Kind regards,

Dr Dorian von Freyhold

April 24 2025

Hi David and Mario,

Thanks again for your follow-up. Please see below a summary of the methodology behind the McMahon survey, ahead of our conversation...

Sample & Fieldwork

- Sample size: 1,033 verified residents of McMahon
- Data collection completed: 8 April 2025
- Margin of error: $\pm 2.5\%$, based on confidence interval calculations for a sample of 1,000 under standard probability assumptions

Recruitment Method

- Respondents were recruited via direct MMS/SMS outreach to mobile numbers validated as residing in the McMahon electorate by a third-party data provider
- Each survey response was tied to the recipient's mobile number, ensuring only one complete per contact

Question Structure

- Survey questions covered:
 - Intended federal vote
 - 2022 federal vote
 - Key voter issues
 - Demographic details (age, gender, income)
- Both intended vote and 2022 vote were asked using the same structure
- 2022 responses closely aligned with AEC outcomes, supporting the reliability of the format

Weighting & Calibration

- The sample was post-weighted to reflect electorate benchmarks using the following variables:
 - Age
 - Gender
 - Household income

- 2022 federal vote
- Some of these were drawn from our internal database, others collected during the survey

Candidate Listing Context

- At the time the survey launched, not all nominations had closed
- The candidate list reflected the most visible contenders in the electorate

Funding & Independence

- The survey was not commissioned by Matthew Camenzuli or any political party
- It was conducted as an independently funded initiative by Compass Polling to better understand voter sentiment in a high-interest electorate

External Validation

- Since completion, reputable pollsters engaged by major parties have replicated the findings
- Journalists conducting on-the-ground interviews have also observed similar sentiment shifts among voters

Happy to go into more detail when we speak. Let me know if there's anything else you'd like in advance.

Kind regards,

Dorian

April 25 2025

Dear Mario,

To clarify, while the interface does display Matt Camenzuli's name as the first element in the drop-down box—and it may appear “preselected”—this default display is purely for convenience and visual consistency. The system is designed so that:

- **No Valid Vote Without Active Selection:** Even though Matt's name is shown by default in the drop-down, the underlying poll software does not automatically register it as a valid vote. A response only becomes valid if the respondent actively clicks to select an option. If they simply hit “submit” without making an active selection, the system flags that entry as invalid and it is not counted.

- **Prevention of Accidental Bias:** This design is intended to prevent accidental votes. For instance, if someone does intend to vote for Mr Camenzuli, they must reselect his name rather than relying on the default. This extra step helps ensure that all counted responses represent a deliberate choice. Thus, even though the UI might suggest a default, votes are only logged when the respondent has actively engaged with the selection process.
- **Impact on Poll Outcomes:** Regarding your concern that this might skew the vote in one direction—if respondents intending to vote for Mr Camenzuli merely submit without changing the selection, those entries are not counted at all. Only votes where an option is explicitly selected by the respondent are tallied. Therefore, this mechanism does not artificially boost his numbers; rather, it prevents unintentional votes from being included, which helps maintain the integrity of the poll outcomes.
- **Drop-Down Behaviour:** Once a respondent opens the drop-down menu, they cannot close it or move on without making an active selection. This further ensures that no default choice is passively accepted as a vote.

I also spoke with our Head of Programming to clarify how the order of candidates in the drop-down was determined. The explanation is that the most visible and incumbent candidates were named first, based on previous polling we have conducted in the seat. This approach is consistent with our standard practice in similar polls to avoid voter confusion and ensure relevance.

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Please don't hesitate to reach out if we can clarify anything further.

Best regards,

Dorian

*Edited for relevance and brevity