

# **Australian Unity Wellbeing Index Survey 23.1**

**Report 23.1  
July 2010**

## **Part A: The Report**

### *“Marginal and Safe Seat Electorates”*

Robert A. Cummins  
School of Psychology, Deakin University

Adele Gibson-Prosser, Melissa Weinberg, Charini Perera and Jacqui Woerner  
Doctoral Students, School of Psychology, Deakin University

**Australian Centre on Quality of Life  
Deakin University, 221 Burwood Highway  
Melbourne, Victoria 3125, Australia**

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Correspondence should be directed to:

Professor Robert A. Cummins  
School of Psychology  
Deakin University  
Burwood, Melbourne, Victoria 3125  
Australia

Email: [cummins@deakin.edu.au](mailto:cummins@deakin.edu.au)

Website: [acqol.deakin.edu.au](http://acqol.deakin.edu.au)

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# Executive Summary

## Purpose:

To report data on Subjective Wellbeing drawn from Federal Electoral Divisions correspond to the following categories of electoral status: ALP Safe, ALP Marginal, Coalition Safe, Coalition Marginal. Each status group comprises five electorates. Data within each status grouping have been combined for the purpose of the statistical analyses.

Data have also been grouped according to the following four eras of Government: Howard, Rudd, End of Rudd, and Gillard.

## Data:

The data have come from many different surveys as follows:

Our regular cross-sectional surveys 2.0-23.0 have been trawled for relevant data corresponding to the 20 selected electorates.

Survey 23.1 was a special-purpose survey (N=1,500), conducted at the same time as Survey 23.0 (April, 2010), but concentrating on the 20 Federal electorates.

Survey 23.2 was a special-purpose survey (N=1,000), conducted over the period 1<sup>st</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> July, shortly after Gillard had been elected to replace Rudd as leader of the Labor Party. Again, data collection was confined to the 20 designated electorates.

## Results:

1. A comparison between surveys using all data revealed an increased satisfaction with Community Connection under Gillard. This probably represents the positive influence on common social interaction caused by the election of Australia's first female Prime Minister.
2. The highest levels of wellbeing for both genders are within Coalition-Safe electorates, while the lowest levels of wellbeing for both genders are within ALP-Safe electorates. The low levels of wellbeing for ALP-Safe apply more strongly to males than to females.
3. The results for age show very low levels of wellbeing for the 46-55y group. This age group is known to be vulnerable to low wellbeing within our regular surveys.
4. In terms of income, ALP-Safe consistently scores below the other three electoral groups at all incomes from \$15K to \$150K. In other words, the relatively lower level of Personal Wellbeing Index for ALP-Safe is not due to differences in income. There must be some other source of negative influence driving down the wellbeing of this group, such as density of housing
5. Both genders indicate a lack of Satisfaction with Government, both during End of Rudd and Gillard periods. It may be that the former indicated a general disenchantment with the performance of Government, while the latter may have reflected a negative view of the process by which Gillard displaced Rudd. It is interesting that these negative views of Government during the Gillard period are not at all reflected in personal wellbeing, which went up at that time.
6. Comparisons between the terms of the leaders found no significant change occurred in the Personal Wellbeing Index of males, or in the Personal Wellbeing Index of females in safe electorates. However, females in marginal electorates have shown a significantly higher level of wellbeing under Gillard

# 1. Introduction

The Australian Unity Wellbeing Index is a barometer of Australians' satisfaction with their lives and life in Australia. Unlike most official indicators of quality of life and wellbeing, it is subjective – it measures how Australians feel about life, and incorporates both personal and national perspectives. The Index shows how various aspects of life – both personal and national – affects our sense of wellbeing.

The Index is an alternative measure of population wellbeing to such economic indicators as Gross Domestic Product and other objective indicators such as population health, literacy and crime statistics. The Australian Unity Wellbeing Index measures quality of life as experienced by the average Australian.

The Index yields two major numbers. The Personal Wellbeing Index is the average level of satisfaction across seven aspects of personal life – health, personal relationships, safety, standard of living, achieving, community connectedness, and future security. The National Wellbeing Index is the average satisfaction score across six aspects of national life – the economy, the environment, social conditions, governance, business, and national security. This report concerns only the Personal Wellbeing Index.

A considerable body of research has demonstrated that most people are satisfied with their own life. In Western nations, the average value for population samples is about 75 percentage points of satisfaction. That is, on a standardised scale from 0 (completely dissatisfied) to 100 (completely satisfied) the average person rates their level of life satisfaction as 75. The normal range is from 70 points to 80 points. We find the Personal Wellbeing Index to always fall within this range. However, satisfaction with aspects of national life are normally lower, falling in the range 55 to 65 points in Australia.

The first index survey, of 2,000 adults from all parts of Australia, was conducted in April 2001. A total of 23 general population surveys have now been conducted, with the most recent in April 2010. Copies of earlier reports can be obtained either from the Australian Unity website ([www.australianunity.com.au](http://www.australianunity.com.au)) or from the Australian Centre on Quality of Life website at Deakin University (<http://www.deakin.edu.au/research/acqol/index.htm>).

The same core index questions, forming the Personal Wellbeing Index, are asked within each survey. In addition we ask two highly general questions. One concerns 'Satisfaction with Life as a Whole'. This abstract, personal measure of wellbeing has a very long history within the survey literature and its measurement allows a direct comparison with such data.

Each survey also includes demographic questions and a small number of additional items that change from one survey to the next. These explore specific issues of interest, either personal or national. Such data have several purposes. They allow validation of the Index, the creation of new population sub-groups, and permit further exploration of the wellbeing construct.

In addition to these general population surveys we sometimes conduct special purpose surveys. These are designed to measure the wellbeing of the population at some particular point in time coinciding with some happening that we consider may have the power to change population wellbeing.

The first of these special surveys was 18.1 conducted in February 2008 following seven successive home-loan rate rises. Report 20.1 concerned the effects of bush-fires in Victoria and floods in Queensland. This Report 23.1 concerns the period surrounding the change of Prime Minister from Rudd to Gillard.

## **1.1. Understanding Personal Wellbeing**

The major measurement instrument used in our surveys is the Personal Wellbeing Index (PWI). This is designed as the first level deconstruction of 'Life as a Whole'. It comprises seven questions relating to satisfaction with life domains, such as 'health' and 'standard of living'. Each question is answered on a 0-10 scale of satisfaction. The scores are then combined across the seven domains to yield an overall Index score, which is adjusted to have a range of 0-100.

On a population basis the scores that we derive from this PWI are quite remarkably stable. The means of our regular surveys range from 73.5 to 76.6, a fluctuation of only 3.1 points. How can such stability be achieved?

We hypothesize that personal wellbeing is not simply free to vary over the theoretical 0-100 range. Rather, it is held fairly constant for each individual in a manner analogous to blood pressure or body temperature. This implies an active management system for personal wellbeing that has the task of maintaining wellbeing, on average, at about 75 points. We call this process Subjective Wellbeing Homeostasis (Cummins et al., 2002).

The proper functioning of this homeostatic system is essential to life. At normal levels of wellbeing, which for group average scores lies in the range of 70-80 points, people feel good about themselves, are well motivated to conduct their lives, and have a strong sense of optimism. When this homeostatic system fails, however, these essential qualities are severely compromised, and people are at risk of depression. This can come about through such circumstances as exposure to chronic stress, chronic pain, failed personal relationships, etc.

Fortunately for us, the homeostatic system is remarkably robust. Many people live in difficult personal circumstances which may involve low income or medical problems, and yet manage to maintain normal levels of wellbeing. This is why the Index is so stable when averaged across the population. But as with any human attribute, some homeostatic systems are more robust than others. Or, put around the other way, some people have fragile systems which are prone to failure.

Homeostatic fragility, in these terms, can be caused by two different influences. The first of these is genetic. Some people have a constitutional weakness in their ability to maintain wellbeing within the normal range. The second influence is the experience of life. Here, as has been mentioned, some experiences such as chronic stress can challenge homeostasis. Other influences, such as intimate personal relationships, can strengthen homeostasis.

In summary, personal wellbeing is under active management and most people are able to maintain normal levels of wellbeing even when challenged by negative life experiences. A minority of people, however, have weaker homeostatic systems as a result of either constitutional or experiential influences. These people are vulnerable to their environment and may evidence homeostatic failure. The identification of sub-groups that contain a larger than normal proportion in homeostatic failure of people is an important feature of our survey analyses.

## 1.2. The Survey Methodology

The data for this Report 23.1 have been derived to correspond with the 20 Federal Electoral Divisions listed in Appendix 1. They comprise five electorates corresponding to each of the following categories of electoral status: ALP Safe, ALP Marginal, Coalition Safe, Coalition Marginal. Data from the five corresponding electorates for each status grouping have been combined for the purpose of the statistical analyses in this report.

The data have come from many different surveys as follows:

Our regular cross-sectional surveys 2.0-23.0 have been trawled for relevant data corresponding to the 20 selected electorates.

Survey 23.1 was a special-purpose survey (N=1,500), conducted at the same time as Survey 23.0 (April, 2010), but concentrating on the 20 Federal electorates. The electorates were identified using current electoral data (including redistributions) gathered from Antony Green's ABC webpage accessed on 06/04/2010 and are used with permission.

<http://www.abc.net.au/elections/federal/2010/calculator/>

These data are more current than those provided by the Australian Electoral Commission webpage. <http://results.aec.gov.au/13745/Website/HouseDivisionClassifications-13745-NAT.htm>

Within each of the four electorate groups we surveyed equal numbers of respondents from their five contributing electorates.

In order to collect these data, a representative sample of people aged 18 years or over and fluent in English, were surveyed by telephone over the period 23<sup>rd</sup> February to 4<sup>th</sup> March. Interviewers asked to speak to the person in the house who had the most recent birthday and was at least 18 years old. A total of 9,593 numbers were called. Of these, 5,885 connected with a respondent and 1,500 agreed to complete the survey. This gives an effective response rate of 25.5%. If the response rate is calculated as (completes/completes + refusals), then it becomes 41%. This low response rate reflects, in part, the methodological constraint that an even geographic and gender split was maintained at all times through the survey.

Survey 23.2 was a special-purpose survey (N=1,000), conducted over the period 1<sup>st</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> July, shortly after Gillard had been elected to replace Rudd as leader of the Labor Party. Again, data collection was confined to the 20 designated electorates, with equal numbers of respondents within each one.

The procedures were the same as for Survey 23.1. A total of 7,340 numbers were called. Of these, 4,287 connected with a respondent and 1,000 agreed to complete the survey. This gives an effective response rate of 23.3%. If the response rate is calculated as (completes/completes + refusals), then it becomes 45.0%. Again, this low response rate reflects, in part, the methodological constraint that an even geographic and gender split was maintained at all times through the survey.

Within each of the four electorate classifications (Safe Labor, Safe Coalition, Marginal Labor, Marginal Coalition), data have been grouped according to the following four eras of Government. Corresponding to both the Electorate type and the era.

- Howard: surveys 3-16. These have been selected to represent the Howard era even though the Coalition was in power over Surveys 1-18. The reason for the omission of some surveys is that key variables were missing from Survey 1, the behaviour of the index was very abnormal in Survey 2 since it was conducted immediately following September 11, and over the period of Surveys 17 to 18 (April to October, 2007) speculation was rife that Labor had found an election-winning leader in Rudd, and this was reflected in a changed performance of the Index.
- Rudd: surveys 18-22. These surveys have been selected even though Survey 18 was conducted one month prior to the election of Rudd in November 2007. The sharp rise in the



Index at that time was indicative that the population was thinking in terms of a new leader. Survey 23 has been omitted from these calculations even though it was conducted during the Rudd era. The sharp fall in the Index at the time of this survey (April, 2010) indicated deep disaffection within the population regarding Rudd's leadership, and his replacement by Gillard just two months later in June, 2010.

- End of Rudd: special survey 23B (N=1,500 sampled from the 20 electorates) plus relevant data from our general population survey of 2,000 people at that time, Survey 23A, using respondents living in the 20 electorates. Data were collected in April 2010.
- Gillard: special survey (23C) collected after Gillard was elected to replace Rudd as leader (N=1,000) in July, 2010.

As a result of the above procedures, eight groups have been formed as follows: 4 groups representing Electorate type and 4 groups representing era of Government (designated by their 'leader'). The analyses to follow will compare the wellbeing of these 8 groups within the demographic characteristics of gender, age and income.

Survey 23A. This was our regular twice-yearly survey of the Australian population (see Report 23.0)

All responses are made on a 0 to 10 scale. The satisfaction responses are anchored by 0 (completely dissatisfied) and 10 (completely satisfied). Initial data screening was completed before data analysis.

### **1.3. Presentation of results and type of analysis**

In the presentation of results to follow, the trends that are described in the text are all statistically significant at  $p < .05$ . More detailed analyses are presented as Appendices. These are arranged in sections that correspond numerically with sections in the main report. All Appendix Tables have the designation 'A' in addition to their numerical identifier (e.g. Table A9.2).

All satisfaction values are expressed as the strength of satisfaction on a scale that ranges from 0 to 100 percentage points.

In situations where homogeneity of variance assumptions has been violated, Dunnetts T3 Post-Hoc Test has been used. In the case of t-tests we have used the SPSS option for significance when equality of variance cannot be assumed.

The raw data for this and all previous reports are available from our website: [http://www.deakin.edu.au/research/acqol/index\\_wellbeing/index.htm](http://www.deakin.edu.au/research/acqol/index_wellbeing/index.htm).

### **1.4. Internal Report Organisation**

- (a) Most Tables are presented as appendices.
- (b) Chapter 1 presents the Executive Summary.
- (c) Chapter 2 presents a comparative between Survey 23B (End of Rudd) and 23C (Gillard).
- (d) Chapter 3 presents a comparative analysis of the four leadership eras.
- (e) Chapter 4 presents a comparative analysis of the four electoral types.
- (f) Each Chapter contains a conclusion.

## 2. A Comparison Between Surveys 23.1 (End of Rudd) and 23.2 (Gillard)

### 2.1. A comparison between surveys using all data.

The tables informing this chapter (A2.1 to A2.6) compare the Personal Wellbeing Index and National Wellbeing Index data for End of Rudd and Gillard. These reveal the following significant results:

#### 2.1.1. *Electorate Type*

ALP Safe: No significant differences.

Coalition Safe: No significant differences in PWI, but the domain of Community Connection – Gillard > End of Rudd

ALP Marginal: No significant differences.

Coalition Marginal: No significant difference.

#### **Conclusion:**

While all Personal Wellbeing Index comparisons and most Personal Wellbeing Index domain comparisons show higher values for Gillard, these generally fail to reach significance due primarily to the small number (N=229 and 359) of respondents. The Personal Wellbeing Index difference for Safe Coalition (+1.7 points for Gillard) would be significant using our larger samples of N=1,000+.

#### 2.1.2. *Gender*

Males: Community Connection – Gillard > End of Rudd

Females: Community Connection – Gillard > End of Rudd

#### **Conclusions:**

As before, the small numbers of respondents are preventing the attainment of significance. The Personal Wellbeing Index for females is +1.3 points for Gillard ( $p < .09$ ) which would be significant with larger samples.

The significant result that does run through these analyses is that of increased satisfaction with Community Connection under Gillard (Figure 2.1). This probably represents the positive influence on common social interaction caused by the election of Australia's first female Prime Minister.

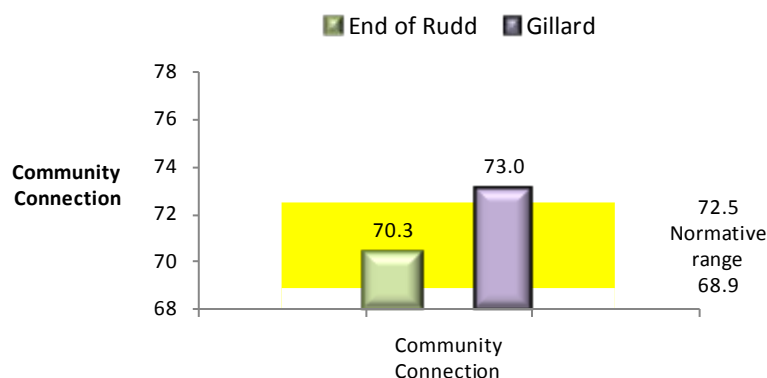


Figure 2.1: Domain Changes from Rudd to Gillard

## **Chapter 2 Conclusions**

Comparisons between the leadership eras show that all Personal Wellbeing Index comparisons and most PWI domain comparisons, show higher values for Gillard. However, these generally fail to reach significance due primarily to the small number of respondents

The significant result that does run through these analyses is increased satisfaction with Community Connection under Gillard. This probably represents the positive influence, on common social interaction, caused by the election of Australia's first female Prime Minister.

### 3. A comparison Wellbeing Under Four Eras of Prime Minister (Leaders)

#### 3.1. Personal Wellbeing Index

The results are drawn from Table A3.5 and the comparisons between the four eras of leader is shown below:

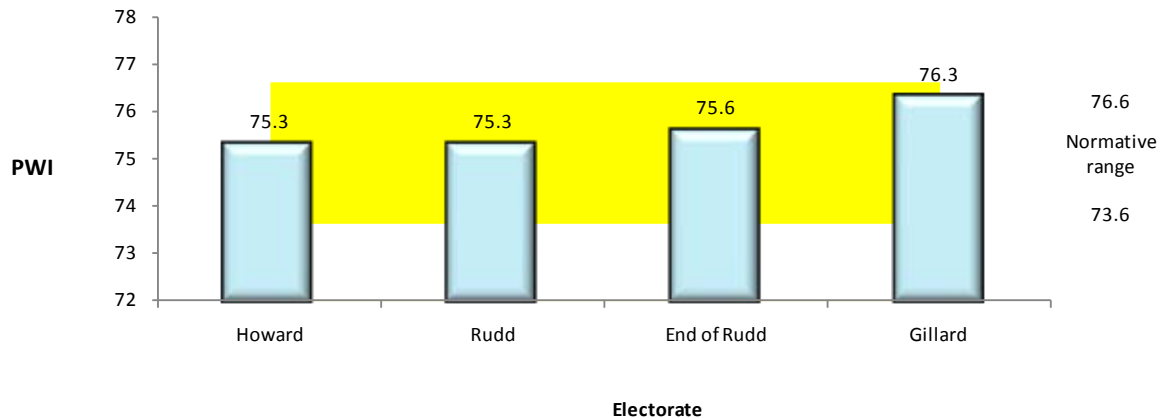


Figure 3.1: Comparison Between Four Eras

It is evident that the Personal Wellbeing Index rose from the long-term levels of Howard and Rudd by a full percentage point when Gillard was elected leader in the ALP. However this fails to reach statistical significance

It is also interesting to note that the generally higher Personal Wellbeing Index recorded on a whole population basis under Rudd (see Report 23.0) is not evident from these current results drawn only from the 20 nominated electorates. This means there should be a significant interaction between electorate type and era in terms of the Personal Wellbeing Index. This is explored in Chapter 4.

#### 3.1.1. *Gender*

Table A3.51 shows the Era x Gender results for the Personal Wellbeing Index. The only differences are in gender, where females are higher.

Tables A3.5.2 to A3.5.8 show the Era x Gender results for the Personal Wellbeing Index domains. Two of these show a significant interaction as Health (Table A3.5.3) and Achieving (Table A3.5.4). The results for Achieving in Life are shown below:

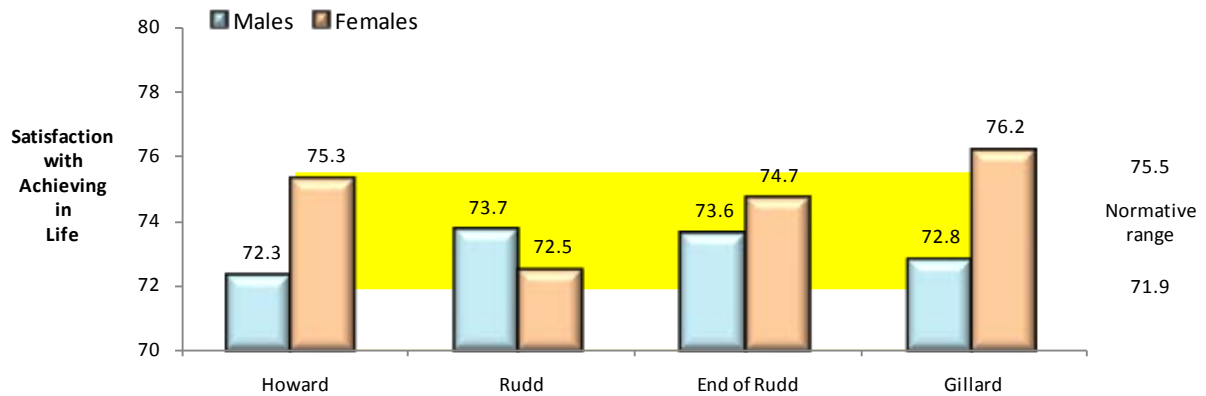


Figure 3.2: Era x Gender (Achieving in Life)

Figure 3.3 shows no change in male satisfaction with Achieving across the four eras. However, female satisfaction does change, being lowest under Rudd and highest under Gillard.

### 3.1.2. Government

Table A4.1.9 shows a different side to opinion regarding the four eras. The results are shown below:

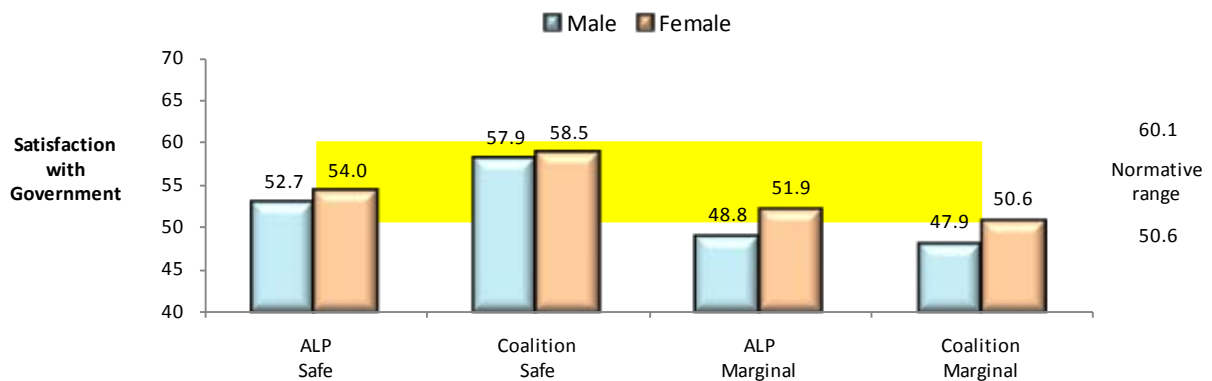


Figure 3.3: Leaders x Gender: Satisfaction with Government

There is no interaction, showing that both genders have changed together, and they clearly indicate a lower satisfaction with Government, both during End of Rudd and Gillard. It may be that the former indicated a general disenchantment with the performance of Government, while the latter may have reflected a negative view of the process by which Gillard displaced Rudd. It is interesting that these negative views of Government during the Gillard period are not at all reflected in personal wellbeing, which went up at that time.

The Electorates x Era x Gender results are shown in Table A4.1.

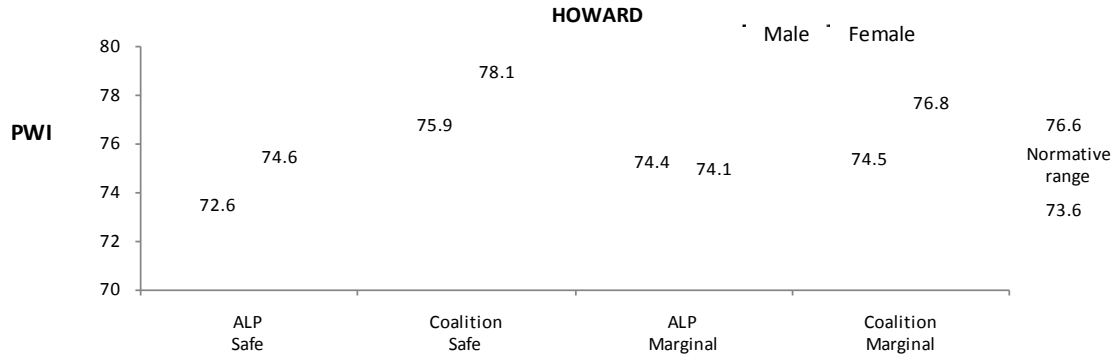


Figure 3.4: Gender differences over the Howard Era (Personal Wellbeing Index)

While the Personal Wellbeing Index is about 2 percentage points higher for females in three of the electorate types, there is no difference in ALP-Marginal.

It is notable that the ALP-Safe (male) Personal Wellbeing Index is very low, being below the normal range.

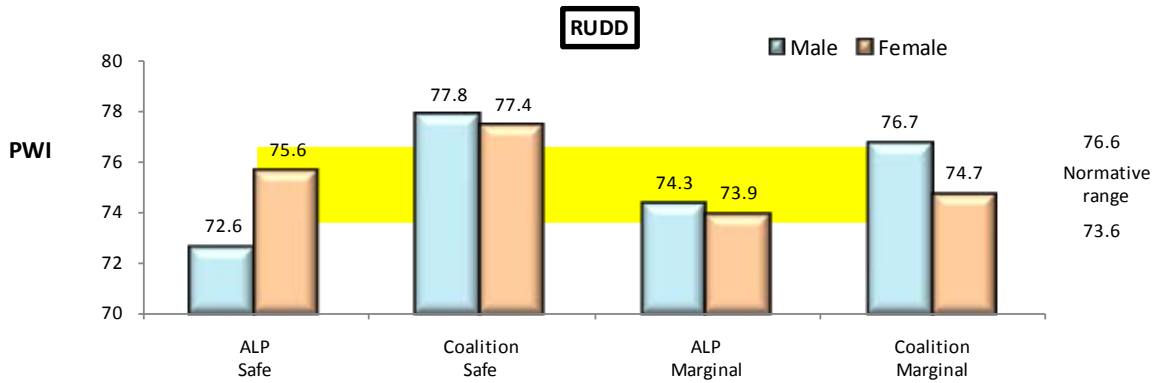


Figure 3.5: Gender differences over the Rudd Era (Personal Wellbeing Index)

Under Rudd, the female advantage in both Coalition electorate types disappears, but is retained in ALP-Safe.

In Coalition-Marginal the Personal Wellbeing Index of males > females.

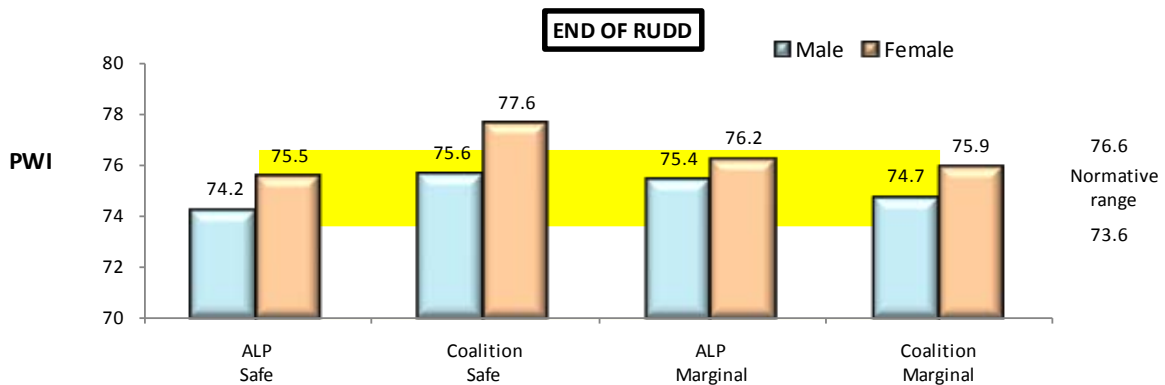


Figure 3.6: Gender differences over the End of Rudd Era (Personal Wellbeing Index)

The higher female Personal Wellbeing Index is evident in all electoral types, most so in Coalition Safe (2.0 points). However, comparing Rudd (Figure 4.5) and End of Rudd (Figure 4.6) reveals:

- (a) No change in female Personal Wellbeing Index for either safe electorate, but a rise to End of Rudd for Marginal ALP (+2.3 points).
- (b) A sharp decrease in male Personal Wellbeing Index for both Coalition electorates from Rudd to End of Rudd (Coalition Safe – 2.4 points; Coalition Marginal – 2.0 points). Neither ALP electoral type changed by more than 2 points.

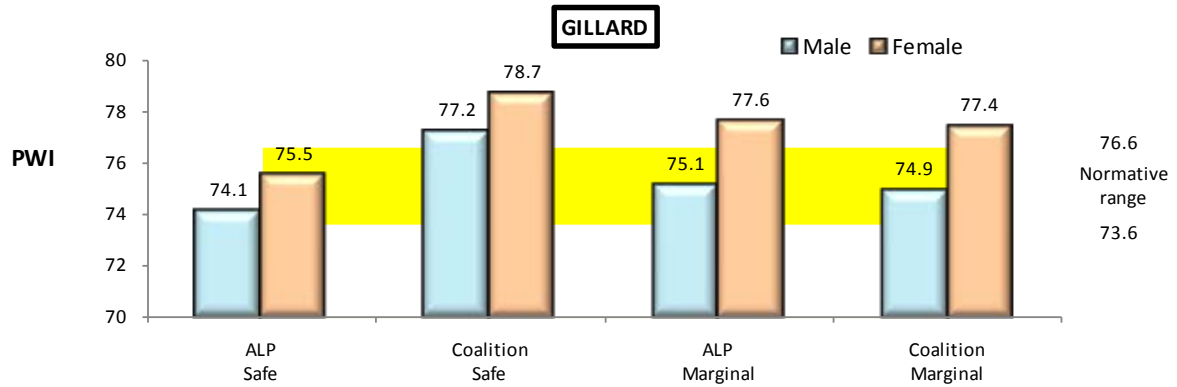


Figure 3.7: Gender differences over the Gillard Era (Personal Wellbeing Index)

Following the election of Gillard, female SWB numerically exceeds that of females in all electorate types. The largest gender difference occurs in the two marginal electorates, where female > male by 2.5 points for the ALP and 2.5 points for the Coalition.

Most notable, however, is the changing female Personal Wellbeing Index under Gillard. While no change is evident in ALP Safe, female wellbeing increased under Gillard from End of Rudd by over 1.1 percentage points and from Rudd by +1.3 points (Coalition Safe), +3.7 points (ALP Marginal), and +2.7 points (Coalition Marginal). These results are shown below for males and females.

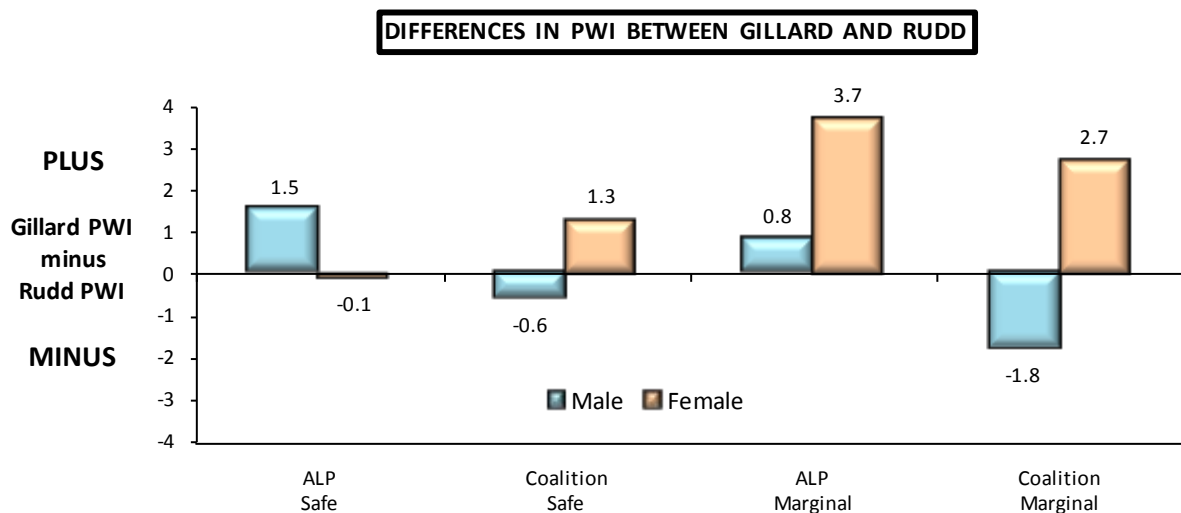


Figure 3.8: Change in Personal Wellbeing Index from the Rudd to Gillard era

It can be seen that no significant change (ie greater than 2 percentage points) has occurred in the Personal Wellbeing Index of males, or in the Personal Wellbeing Index of females in safe electorates. However, females in marginal electorates have shown a significantly higher level of wellbeing under Gillard.

A more detailed picture of the changes in Personal Wellbeing Index by gender, electorate type and era is shown below. This allows the pattern of higher wellbeing under Gillard to be seen in context.

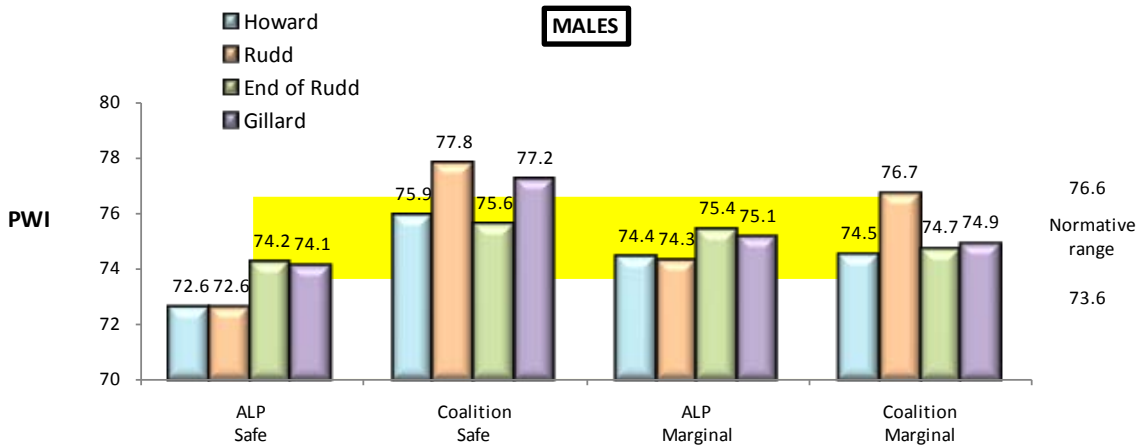


Figure 3.9: Males: Era x Electorate (Personal Wellbeing Index)

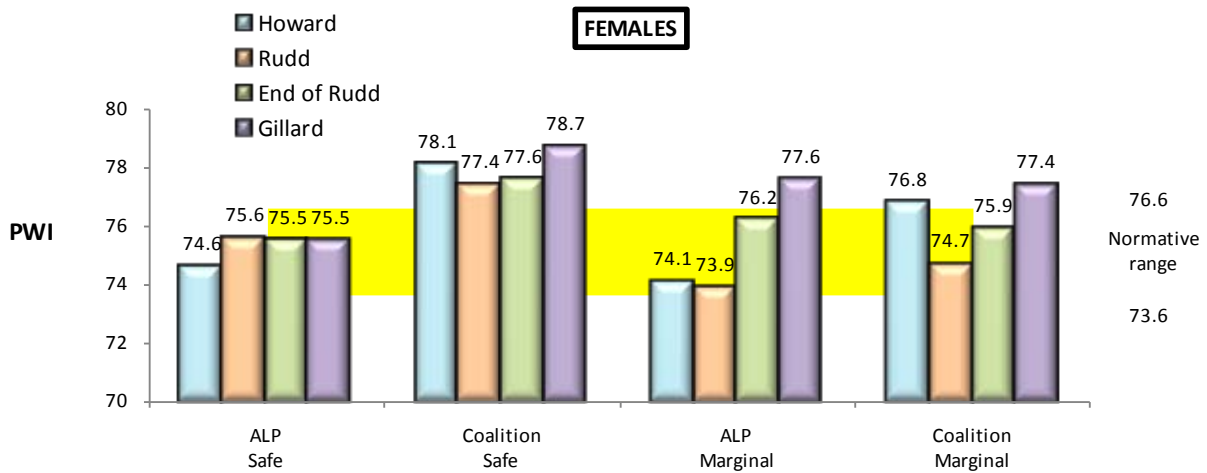


Figure 3.10: Females: Era x Electorate (Personal Wellbeing Index)

## Government

Table A4.1.1 reports Electorates x Era x Gender for Satisfaction with Government. These show mixed results but no clear trends.



**3.2. Electorate x Era x Age (Personal Wellbeing Index)**

Table A4.2 reports these results, also shown below.

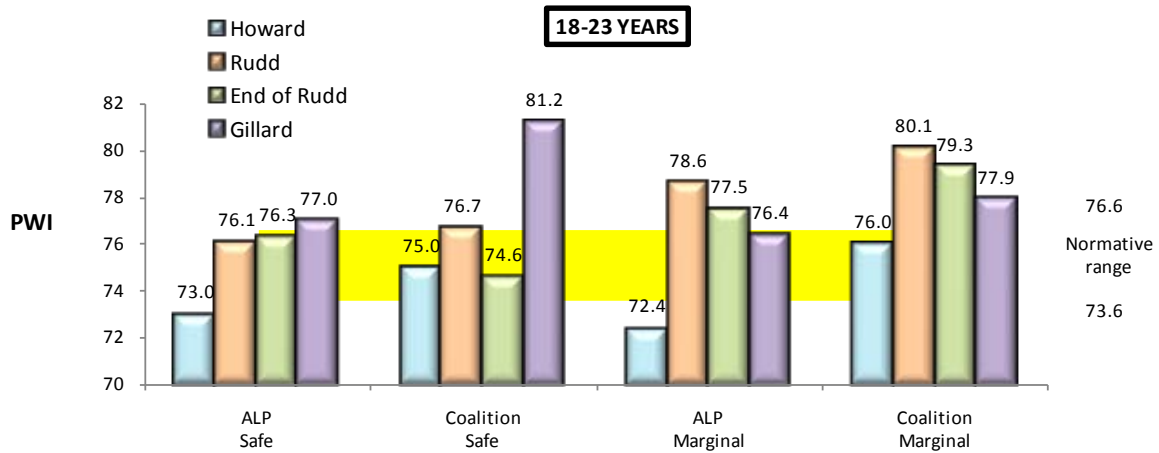


Figure 3.11: 18-23 years

The SWB of all electorate groups clearly rose after Rudd was elected. The rise took the wellbeing of both ALP electorates from below the normal range to well-within or above the normal range.

The effect of Gillard is very mixed in this youngest age group. The rise in wellbeing is only evident within Coalition-Safe, where it has risen to a very high level. But the N=15 is too small to be reliable.

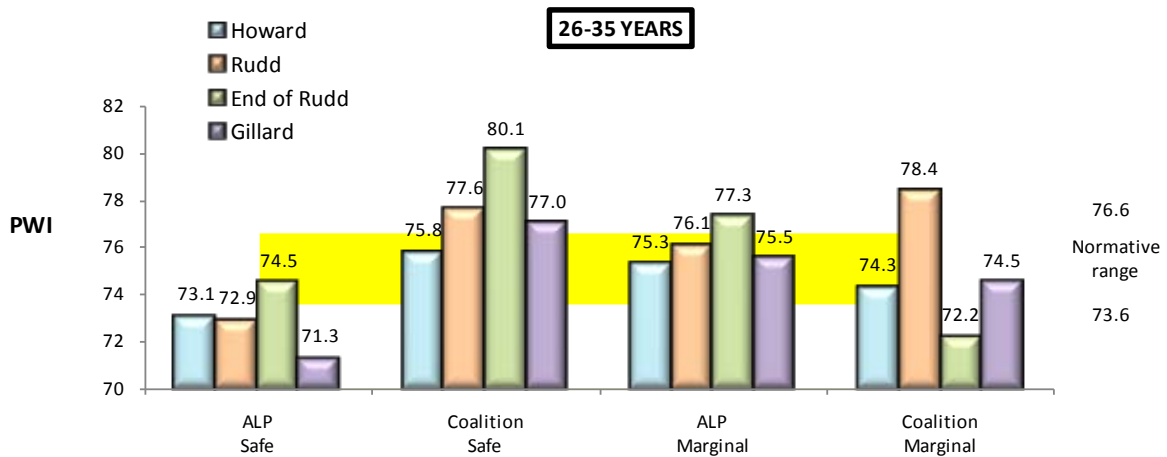


Figure 3.12: 26-35 years

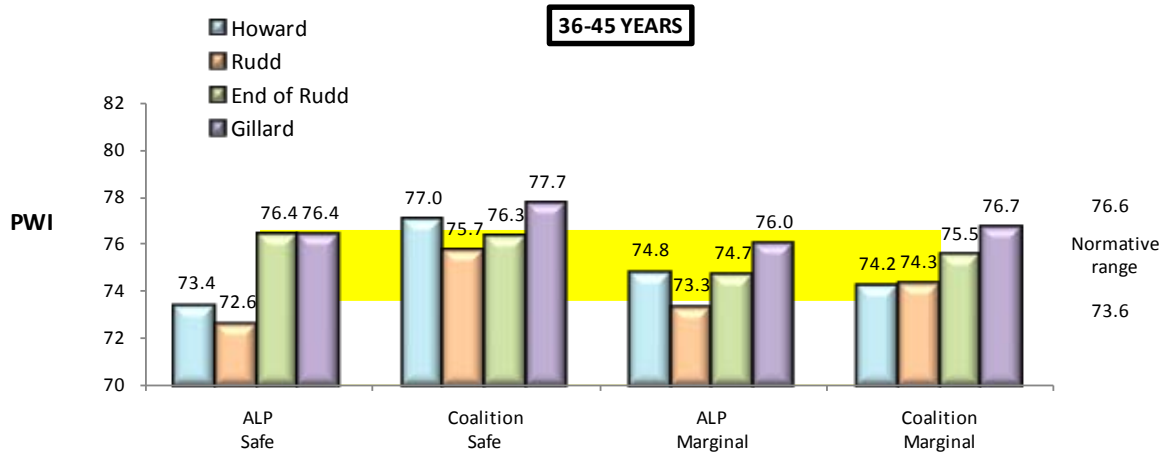


Figure 3.13: 36-45 years

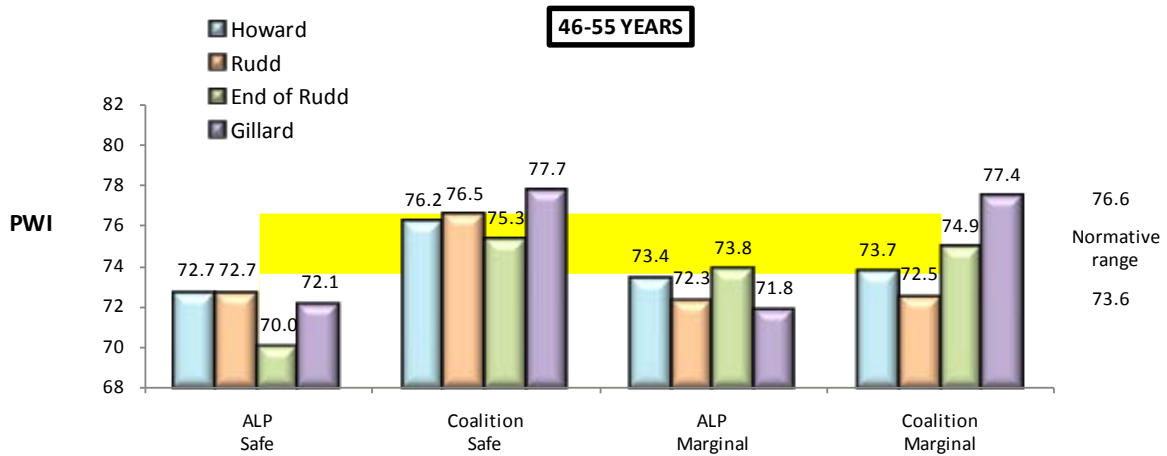


Figure 3.14: 46-55 years

It is interesting that the two ALP groups have very low wellbeing, and that the election of Gillard had no effect to raise this wellbeing.

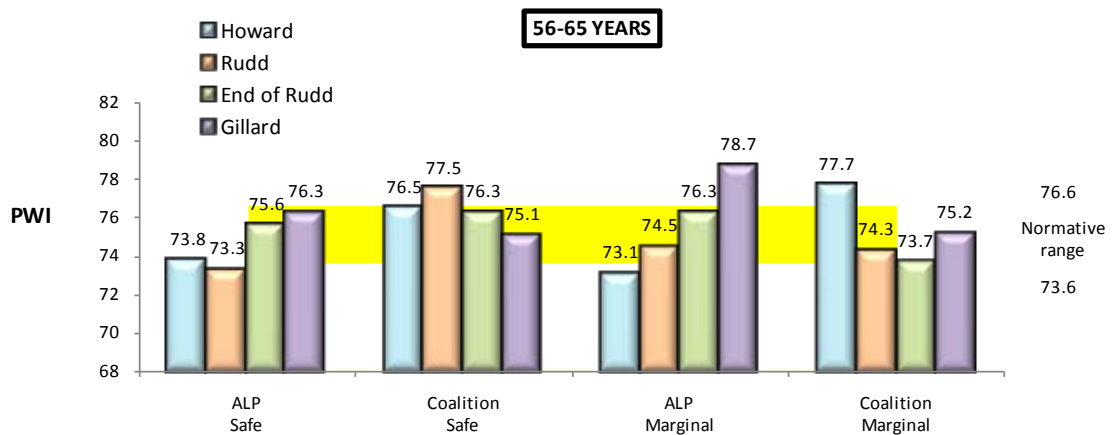


Figure 3.15: 56-65 years

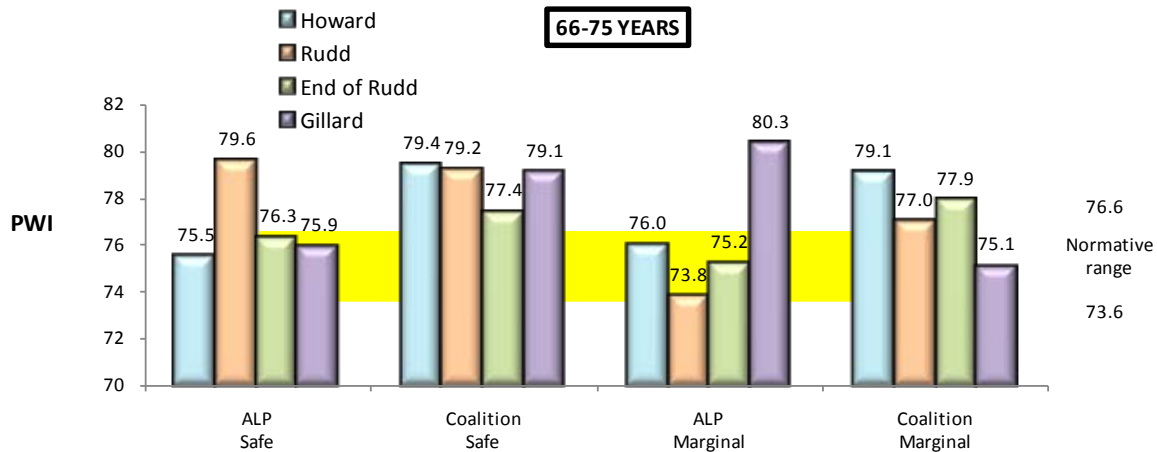


Figure 3.16: 66-75 years

Table A4.2.1 shows the collapsed data for the 18-35y and for the 64y+ groups. Again, the interactions are not significant.

**Conclusion:**

While there are significant main effects in Table A4.2, none of the interactions are significant.

**Government:**

Table A4.2.3 shows the Electorate x Era x Age ANOVAs for Age. However, several of the cell sizes are too small to be reliable. Thus, Table A4.2.4 shows the collapsed results for 18-35y and Table A4.2.5 the collapsed results for 66+ years.

Overall, these results show that the disaffection with Government during the End of Rudd and Gillard era (see Figure 3.3) applied least to the Coalition-Marginal groups and variously with age. No simple conclusion is evident.

**3.3. Electorate x Era x Income**

Table A4.3 reports these results for the Personal Wellbeing Index while Table A4.3.1 and reports collapsed \$30,000 data.

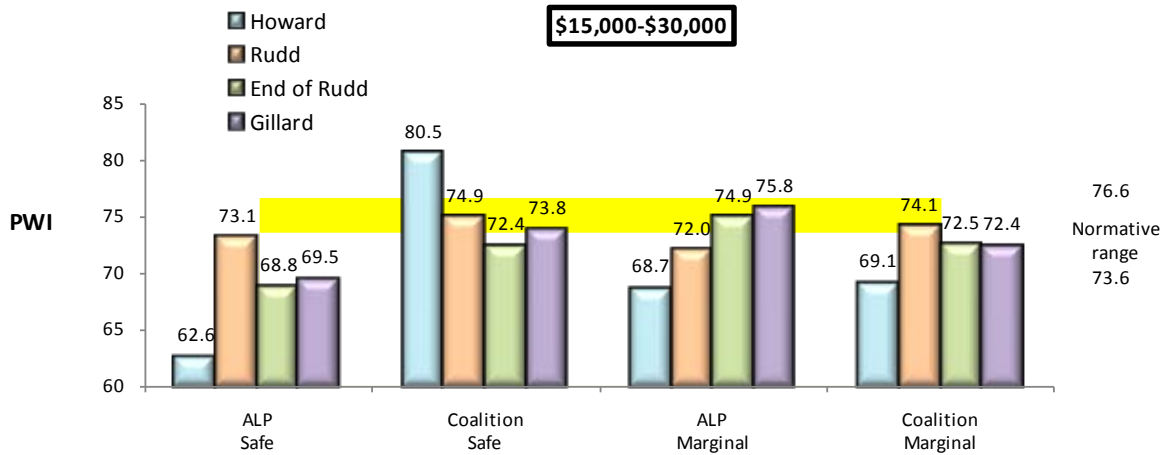


Figure 3.17: \$15,000-\$30,000

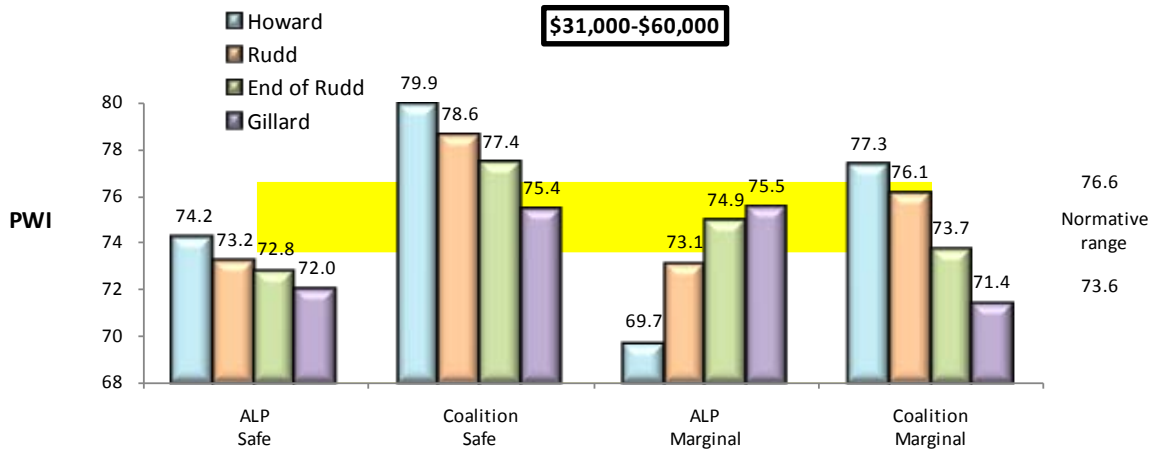


Figure 3.18: \$31,000-\$60,000

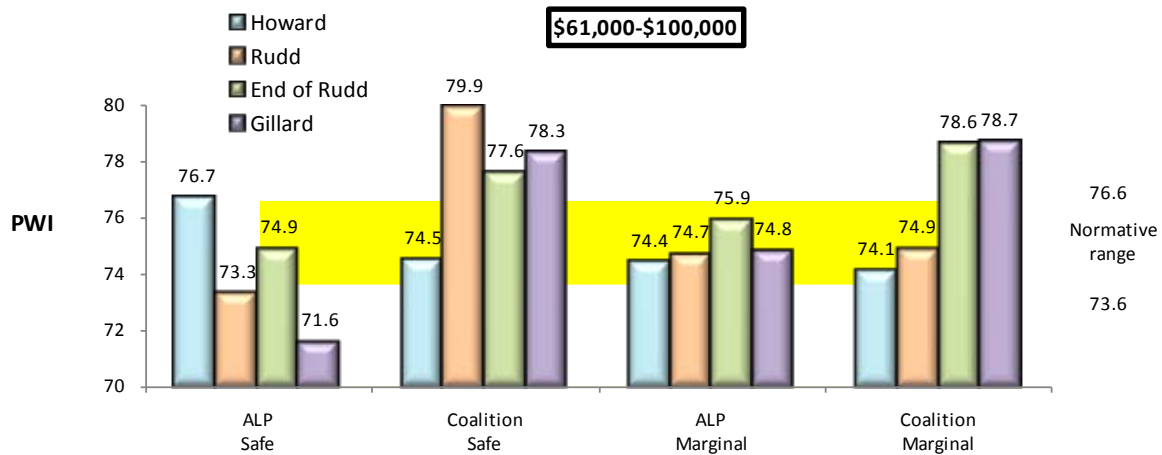


Figure 3.19: \$61,000-\$100,000

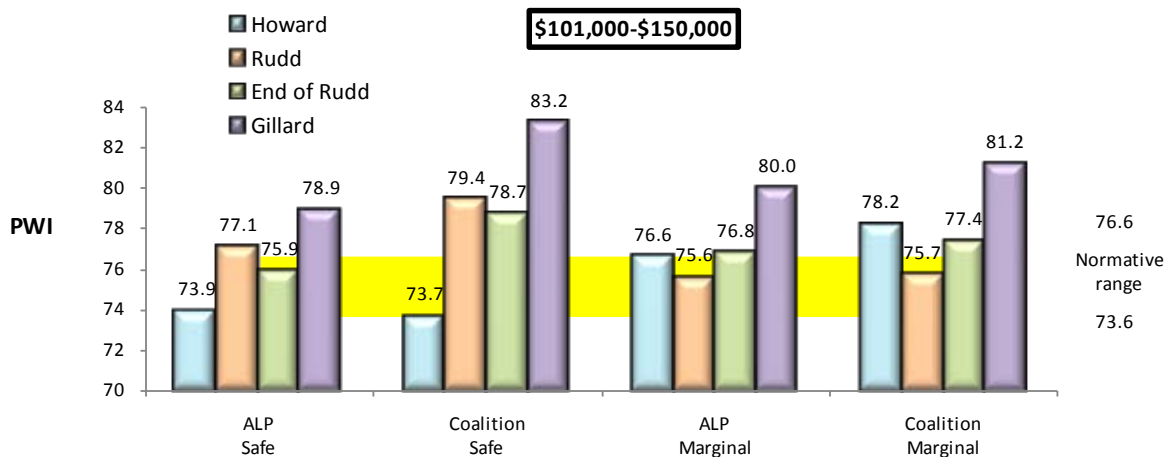


Figure 3.20: \$101,000-\$150,000

While several of the main effects are significant, none of the interactions are significant.

### Government

Table A4.3.2 reports the Electorate x Era x Income results for Government, while Table A4.3.3 reports the collapsed data for <\$30,000. While several interactions are significant there appears to be no coherent, simple pattern to the results.

### Chapter 3 Conclusions

The Personal Wellbeing Index rose from the long-term levels of Howard and Rudd by a full percentage point when Gillard was elected leader in the ALP. However, this failed to reach statistical significance.

In terms of changes within the PWI domains, there is a significantly different response between the genders. Female satisfaction with Achieving in Life is lowest under Rudd and highest under Gillard. However, there is no change in male satisfaction with Achieving across the four eras.

In terms of satisfaction with Government, both genders have changed together. They clearly indicate a lower satisfaction with Government during the End of Rudd and Gillard eras. It may be that the former indicated a general disenchantment with the performance of Government, while the latter may

have reflected a negative view of the process by which Gillard displaced Rudd. It is interesting that these negative views of Government during the Gillard period are not at all reflected in personal wellbeing, which generally rose at that time.

The SWB of all electorate groups clearly rose after Rudd was elected. The rise took the wellbeing of both ALP electorates from below the normal range to well-within or above the normal range.

However, the increased PWI for females under Gillard differs between electoral types. While no change is evident in ALP Safe, female wellbeing increased under Gillard, compared with Rudd, by +1.3 points (Coalition Safe), +3.7 points (ALP Marginal), and +2.7 points (Coalition Marginal).

## 4. Federal Electorates

### 4.1. Electoraltes during End of Rudd: Personal Wellbeing Index

The following results are drawn from Survey 23.1, the special survey of 1,500 people drawn from the four electoral types of interest in April 2010 (End of Rudd).

Table A3.1 shows the Personal Wellbeing Index, domains, and Life as a Whole for each of the four electoral groups (Safe ALP, Safe Coalition, Marginal ALP, Marginal Coalition). Comparisons across the electoral groups show no difference for the Personal Wellbeing Index, but significant differences for Safety ( $p < .001$ ) and Community ( $p = .006$ ). These figures are shown below:

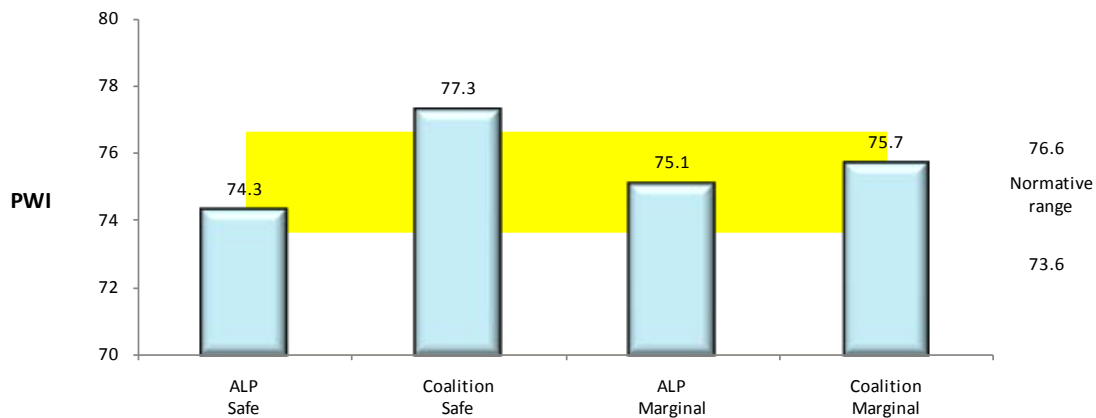


Figure 4.1: Electoraltes: Personal Wellbeing Index

Even though these differences are not significant using only the End of Rudd data, they do show the same trends as the complete data set (see later) and it is interesting to note that the Personal Wellbeing Index for Coalition Safe lies above the normal range.

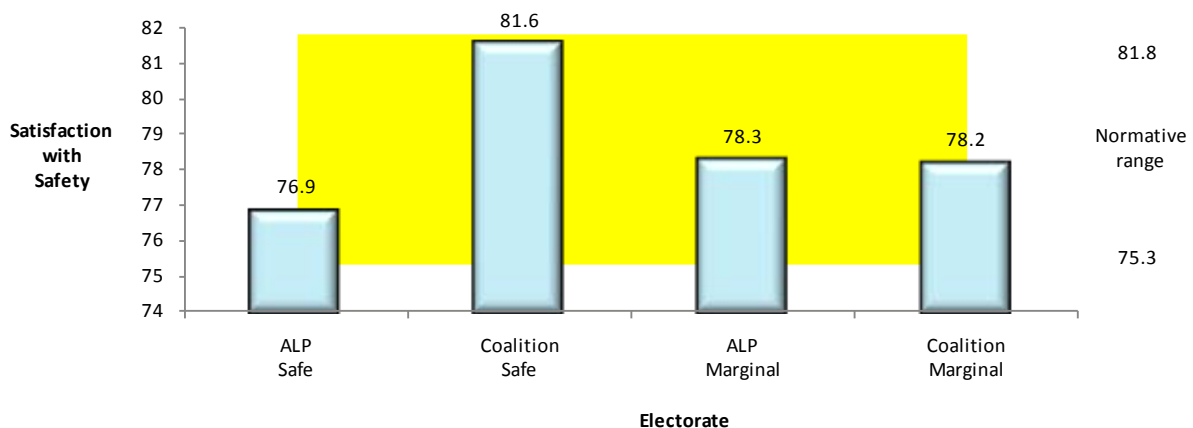


Figure 4.2: Satisfaction with How Safe you Feel: Personal Wellbeing Index

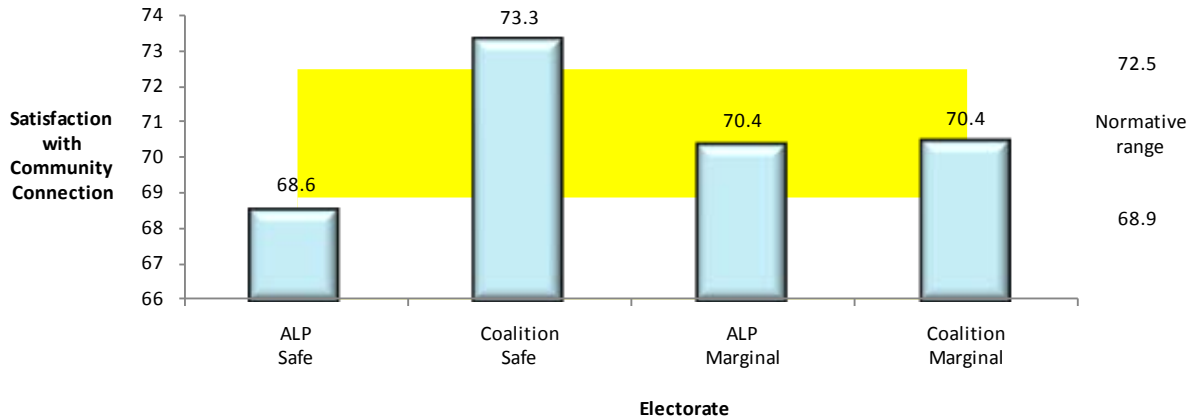


Figure 4.3: Satisfaction with Community Connectedness: Personal Wellbeing Index

All three figures show the same pattern, with the Coalition Safe being higher than the other groups. While the other groups do not differ among themselves, it is notable that ALP Safe is below the normal range for community. These differences may reflect relative community advantage and disadvantage, respectively, as might be expected.

#### 4.2. Electoraltes during End of Rudd: National Wellbeing Index

Table A3.1 shows the National Wellbeing Index and domains. While the National Wellbeing Index does not differ between groups, three domains do differ as Economic Situation ( $p = .000$ ), Government ( $p = .000$ ) and National Security ( $p = .005$ ). These figures are shown below:

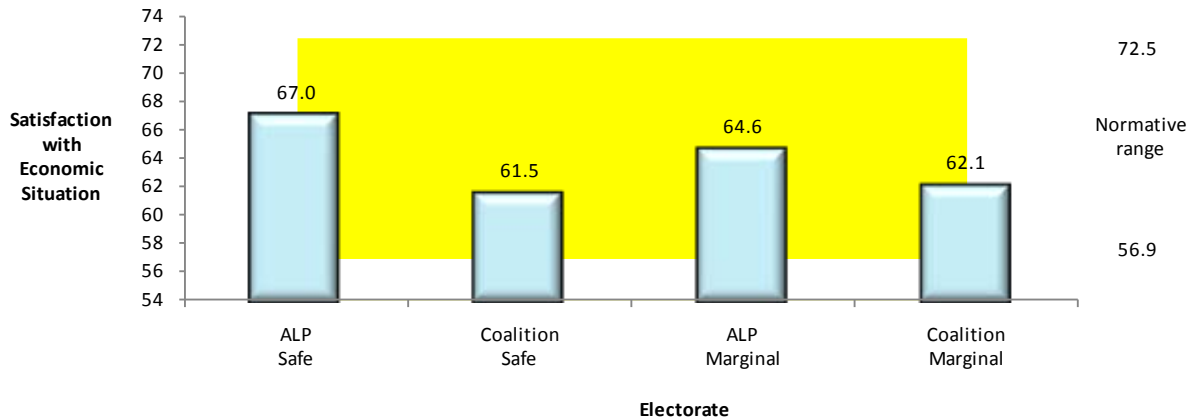


Figure 4.4: Satisfaction with Economic Situation: Personal Wellbeing Index



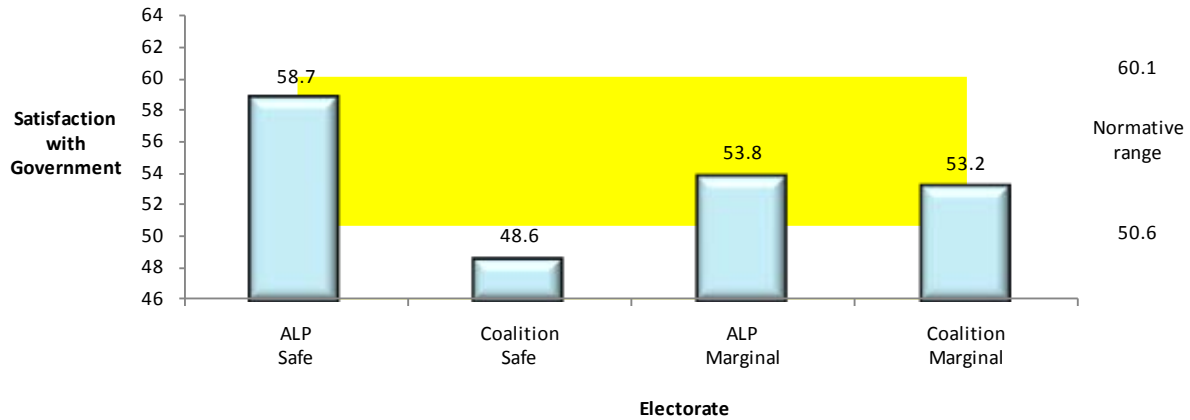


Figure 4.5: Satisfaction with Government: Personal Wellbeing Index

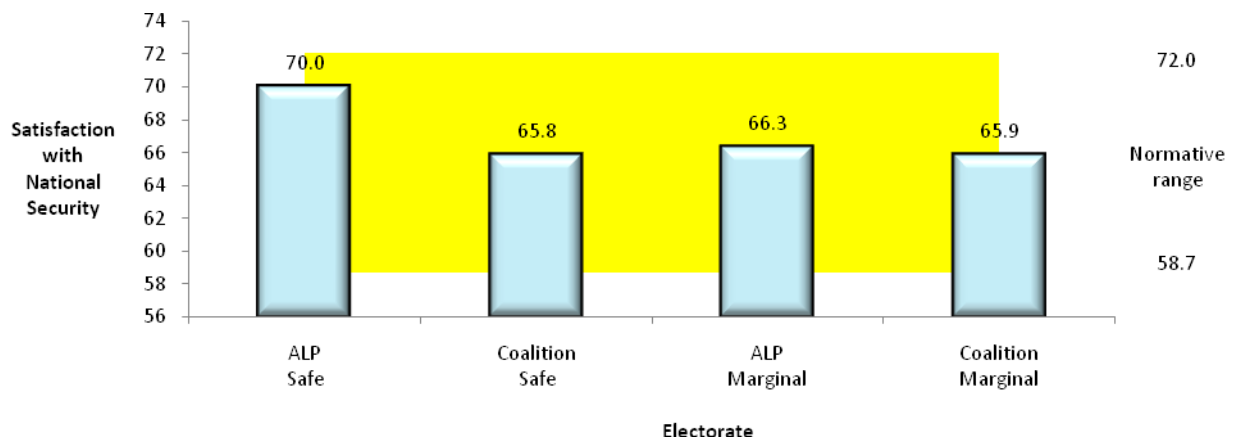


Figure 4.6: Satisfaction with National Security: Personal Wellbeing Index

Here it can be seen that the pattern for the Personal Wellbeing Index has been reversed. ALP Safe is now the most satisfied while Coalition Safe is the least satisfied. It would seem likely that this difference is driven by the perception of the Government having at least some responsibility for these national indicators. Indeed, the trend of these results is most evident in Satisfaction with Government, where Coalition Safe is actually below the normal range.

If this explanation is correct, then it is interesting to note the three national domains that show no group differences as Environment, Social Conditions, and Business. Certainly it seems that these three are intuitively less under government control than the Economic Situation and National Security.

This, then, shows the possibility that perceptions of Government are sensitive to media coverage of the Economic Situation and National Security. It is possible that the Coalition exploited this connection by engineering the ‘children overboard’ affair in October 2001. The government claimed, falsely, that sea-faring asylum seekers had thrown children overboard in a ploy to secure rescue and passage to Australia. This led the government to introduce tougher boarder-protection measures, making itself appear strong on national security, and it was re-elected with an increased majority in November that year.

### Gender effects - End of Rudd and Combined data

Table A3.2 shows no gender differences between the electoral groups when the data are confined to Survey 23.1 alone. However, there is a main effect for gender, and this shows the consistently higher wellbeing for females within all electoral groups, averaging about +1.2 points over males.

Tables A3.2 to A3.2.8 show the Electorate x Gender comparisons for the Personal Wellbeing Index and domains using the combined data from all surveys. This increases the sensitivity of the analyses due to larger Ns. The results for the Personal Wellbeing Index are shown in Figure 4.7.

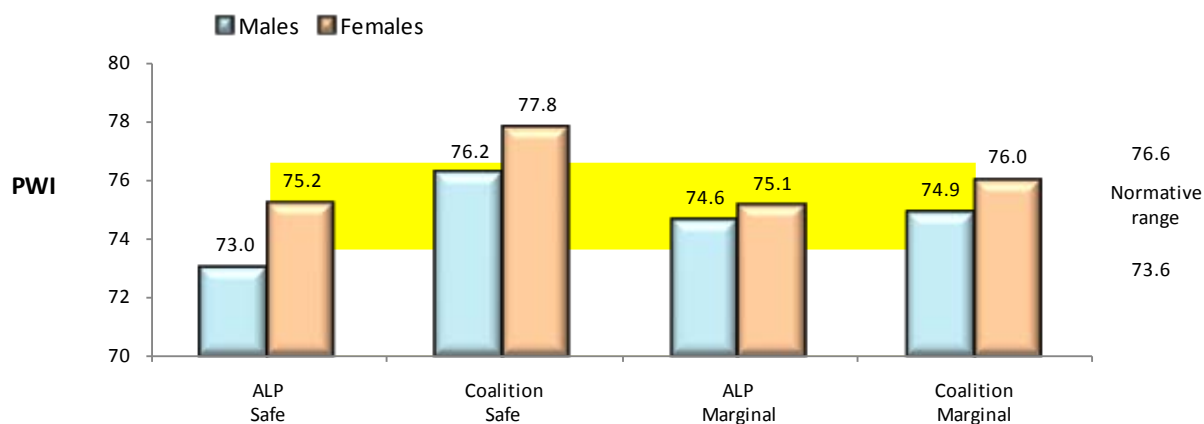


Figure 4.7: Electoral Type x Gender: Personal Wellbeing Index

The above results (Table A3.2.1) show:

- ALP-Safe-Male has below normal range (-0.6 points) levels of wellbeing.
- Coalition-Safe-Female has above normal range (+0.2 points) levels of wellbeing.
- For both genders, Coalition-Safe > ALP-Safe and Marginal.
- For females, Coalition-Safe > Coalition Marginal.
- For males, ALP-Marginal and Coalition-Marginal > ALP Safe.

### Conclusion:

The highest levels of wellbeing for both genders are within Coalition-Safe electorates, while the lowest levels of wellbeing for both genders are within ALP-Safe electorates. The low levels of wellbeing for ALP-Safe apply more strongly to males than to females.

Tables A3.2.2 to A3.2.8 show the Electorate x Gender results for the Personal Wellbeing Index domains. Essentially, these all follow the same pattern of Figure 4.7, with Coalition-Safe as the highest and ALP-Safe as the lowest. Some domains are more sensitive than others, with the most sensitive being Relationships (Table A3.2.5), and the least sensitive being Health (Table A3.2.3) which shows no significant differences at all. The domain of Health is normally the least sensitive domain, so this finding adds credibility as to the integrity of the data.

Table A3.2.9 shows the Electorate x Gender comparison for Government. The only effect is for gender, with females generally scoring higher than males.

**Age effects – End of Rudd and Combined data**

Table A3.3 shows the data for Survey 23.1 alone, and reports two significant differences within the age groups 25-35y (p = .019) and 46-55y (p = .039). This is shown below:

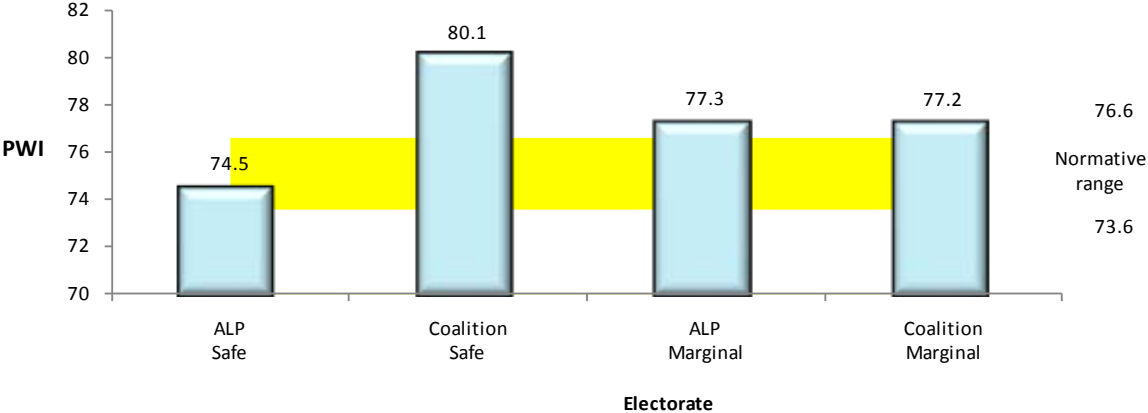


Figure 4.8: Age (26-35 years) x Electorate: Personal Wellbeing Index

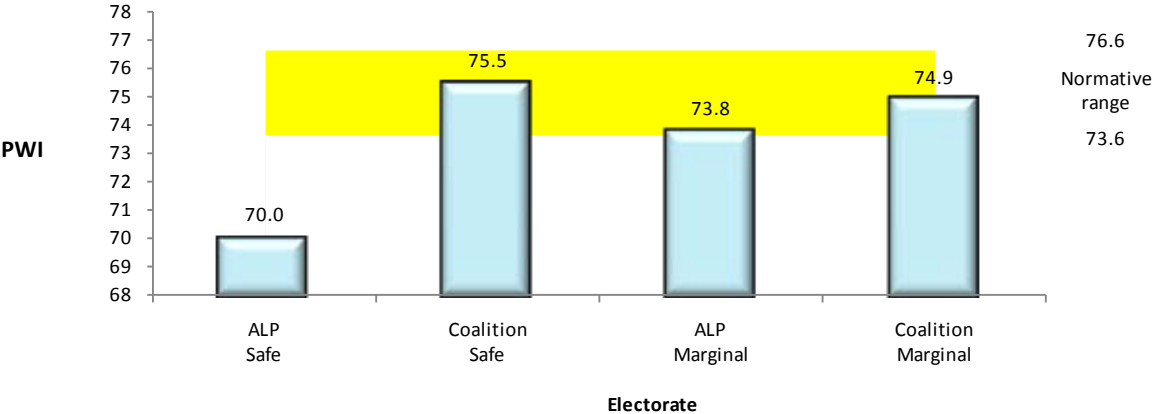


Figure 4.9: Age (46-55 years) x Electorate: Personal Wellbeing Index

Both figures show the same pattern as low satisfaction within ALP Safe and high satisfaction with Coalition Safe. The ALP safe value is particularly low and well below the normal range for the 46-55 group.

Table A3.3 also shows a significant effect for age only for ALP Safe.

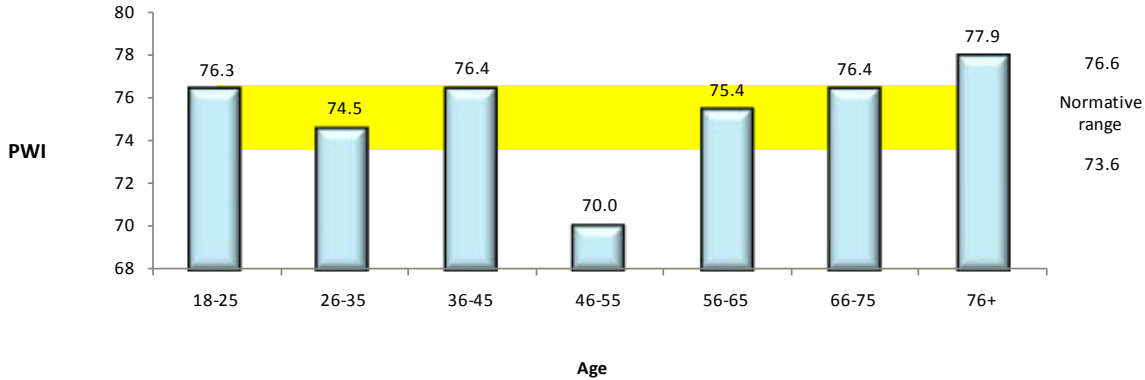


Figure 4.10: ALP Safe Electorate x Age: Personal Wellbeing Index

Figure 4. shows a remarkable fall in wellbeing for the 46-55y group within ALP Safe. This result is reliable, based on N=75. The reason for this is not clear.

Table A3.3.1 reports Electorates x Age for the National Wellbeing Index. There is no main effect for electorates and no interaction. There is a very low National Wellbeing Index for Coalition Marginal aged 56-65 years. This may be an anomalous result.

Table A3.3.2 reports Electorates x Age for the national domain of Economic Situation. There is a strong main effect (p = .001) for electorates, showing the same pattern as Figure 4.4. No other results are significant.

Table A3.3.3 reports Electorates x Age for the national domain of Government. This shows a significant effect for electorate (See Figure 4.5) and for Age, showing very low values for Coalition Marginal aged 56-65 years. The interaction is not significant.

Table A3.3.4 reports Electorates x Age for National Security. Only age shows a significant effect generated by very low scores for ALP Marginal 66-75y and Coalition Marginal 56-65y. These results appear anomalous and the interaction is not significant.

**Conclusion:**

The results for age seem to show little of interest except, perhaps, the very low levels of wellbeing for the 46-55y group. This age group is known to be vulnerable to low wellbeing within our regular surveys.

**Income effects – End of Rudd**

Table A3.4 shows one significant difference between electorates within the income group \$151-250K (p = .007). This overall income group comprises 9.5% of the total sample and is shown below.

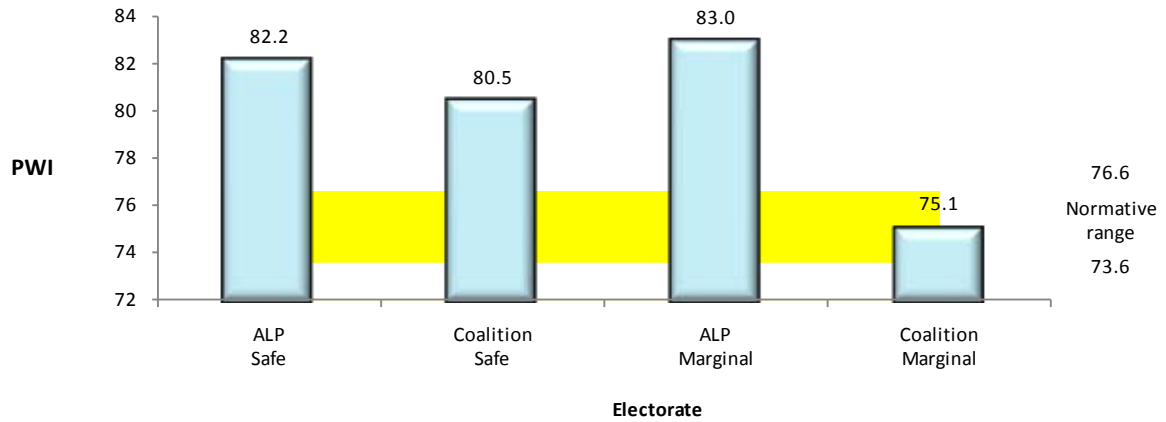


Figure 4.11: Income (\$151,000-\$250,000) x Electorate: Personal Wellbeing Index

This shows a significantly lower Personal Wellbeing Index for Coalition Marginal. The reason for this is unclear and it may constitute a random effect due to the fairly small N=39 for this group.

Figure 4.12 to Figure 4.15 show the pattern of within-electoral group differences in terms of household income (Table A3.4).

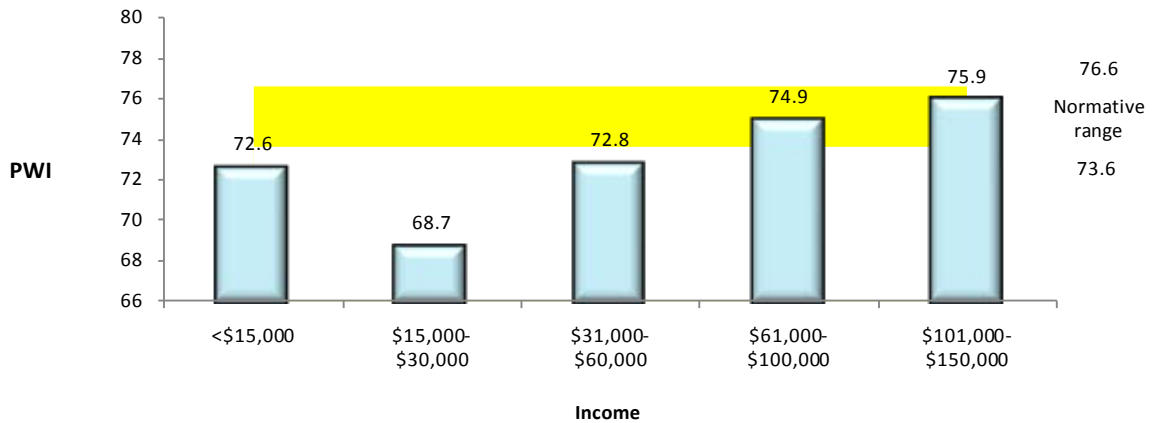


Figure 4.12: ALP Safe Electorate x Income: Personal Wellbeing Index

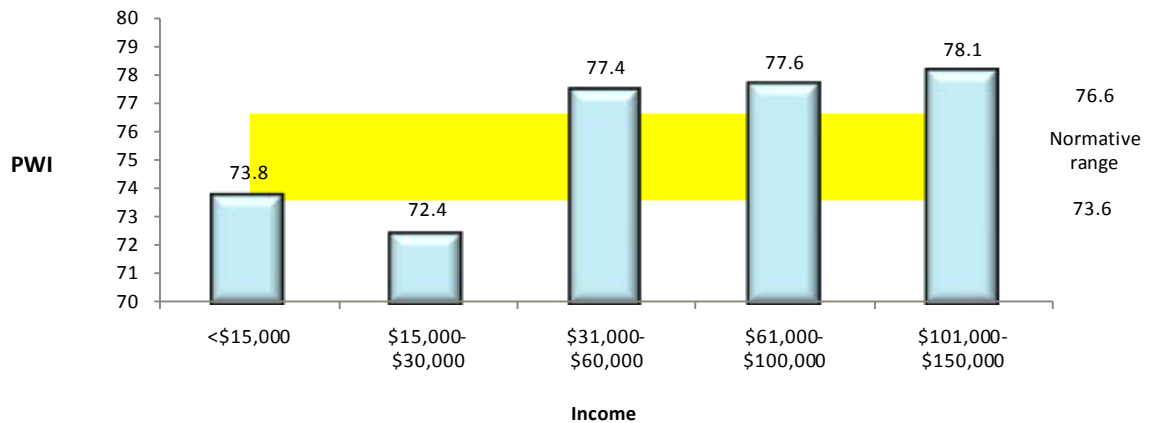


Figure 4.13: Coalition Safe Electorate x Income: Personal Wellbeing Index

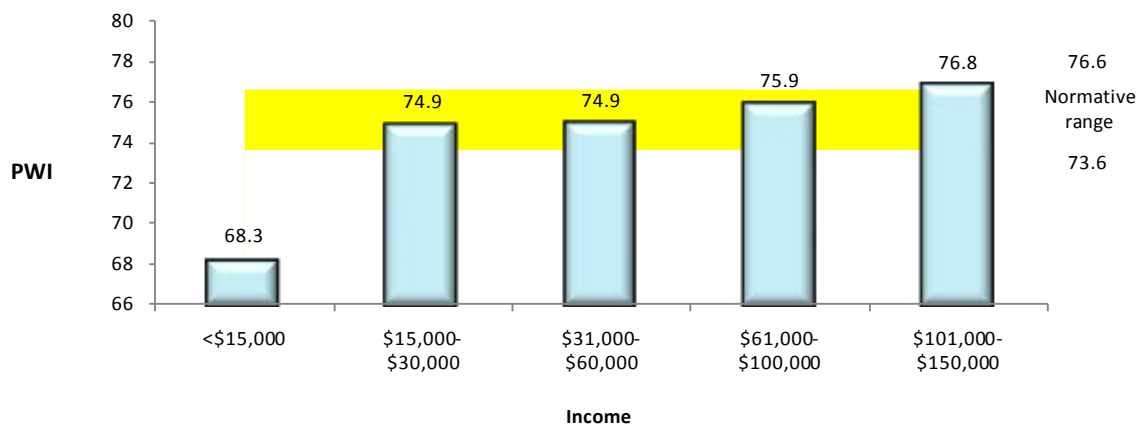


Figure 4.14: ALP Marginal Electorate x Income: Personal Wellbeing Index

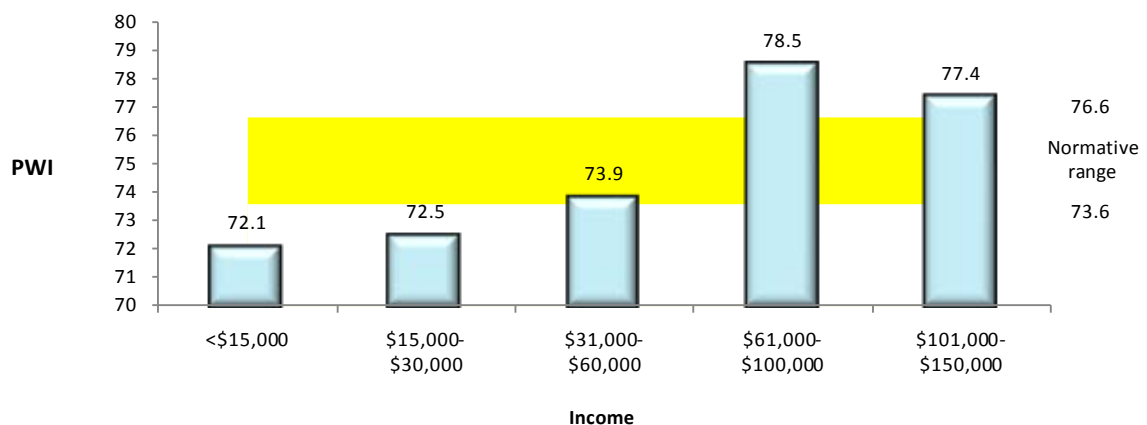


Figure 4.15: ALP Marginal Electorate x Income: Personal Wellbeing Index

While the usual pattern is evident for three of these electorates, ALP Marginal shows that the \$15-30K group has a higher Personal Wellbeing Index than the other electoral groups, lying well within the normal range. The reason for this is not clear.

Table A3.4.1 reports the Electorates x Income for the National Wellbeing Index. The interaction is significant ( $p = .018$ ) caused by a lack of response to income by both safe electorates and a rising

response for both marginal electorates. This is shown for Coalition Safe and Marginal Electorates below:

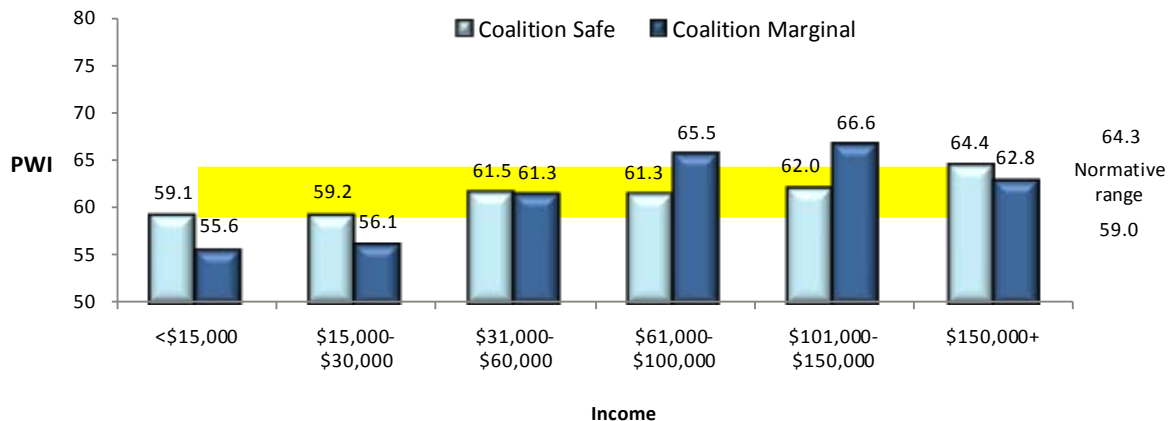


Figure 4.16: ALP Marginal Electorate x Income: Personal Wellbeing Index

Whereas Coalition Safe lies within the normal range for all levels of household income, Coalition Marginal only makes the normal range with an income of \$31-60K. Presumably, this reflects the nature of the electorate in that low income people have more room to move in an upward direction. This same pattern applies to ALP Marginal, but they enter the normal range at a lower income (\$15-30K).

Table A3.4.2 reports Electorates x Income for Economic Situation. While the main effects of Electorate and Income are significant, their interaction is not. This also applies to satisfaction with Government (Table A3.4.3) and National Security (Table A3.4.4).

## Chapter 4 Conclusions

In general, the highest levels of Personal Wellbeing are found in Coalition Safe and the lowest in ALP-Safe. These differences may reflect relative community advantage and disadvantage, respectively, as might be expected.

In terms of the National Wellbeing Index, the electoral pattern has been reversed. ALP Safe is now the most satisfied while Coalition Safe is the least satisfied. This pattern is most marked in terms of satisfaction with Government, the Economic Situation and National Security. It is possible that this difference is driven by the perception of the Government having at least some responsibility for these national indicators. Indeed, Coalition Safe is actually below the normal range for satisfaction with Government.

The interaction of electorates and income is interesting in showing that ALP-Safe consistently scores below the other three electoral groups at all incomes from \$15K to \$150K. In other words, the relatively lower levels of Personal Wellbeing Index for ALP-Safe is not due to differences in income. There must be some other source of negative influence driving down the wellbeing of this group.