2014 Vision for Australia
Survey Analysis

The 2014 Vision for Australia Survey was conducted in January and February 2014. Of the respondents, 39.48% were members of the Labor Party and 60.52% were not.

Respondents generally used the internet either every day, regularly consumed media via television (68.10%) & radio news (65.18%), as well as Facebook (49.64%) and online newspapers 49.08%.

Importance of Policy
One issue that was apparent in responses to the survey was the importance of policy to our supporters.

When asked for the top 3 reasons they had either supported or joined the Labor Party, the majority of respondents said that it was because they support the issues that they “believe Labor stands for like rights for employees in the workplace, better health and education services and a fair go for all Australians” (55.31%). The top responses to that question were the answer previously listed, and because they “want to bring about change in social and environmental policy” (37.66%).

In addition to this, when asked for the most important reason, 58.93% chose options that emphasised policy & issues, and 27.55% explicitly said that it was to support the issues that they believe Labor stands for.

A concern with policy also was shown in the questions about volunteering and the actions that people would most likely want to undertake. Of those who wanted to volunteer with the party, 49.82% said they’d most likely agree to volunteer if they could help develop or participate in the party’s policy process, an option that came second only to opting to hand out “how-to-vote” cards.

This interest was also reflected by the responses to when supporters were asked what would be the most unlikely activity they would do as a volunteer. Responses
indicated that developing or participating in the Party’s policy process would be the most unlikely activity for them to do. Only 9.26% reported that if they were asked that they would be unlikely to agree to do so.

When asked what that they would like to see more of in the Labor Party, 57.17% said that they would like to see more discussion & say on policy, and 30.13% said that it was the most important change they’d like to see (see right).

Policy discussion was also the biggest reason why members attended branch meetings, with 37.81% saying that policy discussion was their main reason for attending. 62.05% also said that they would either be interested or very interested in participating in online meetings based around policy discussion and development, with only 18.13% saying they wouldn’t be interested.

Policy information was also listed as type of content that people were most likely to access on the website, with 42.33% listing policy information as the information they access on our website. It is worth noting that other responses suggest that people also just browse generally rather than for anything specific (40.05%) and that news is also an important type of information our website users are looking for (38.74%).

When asked about what kind of information they would like to see more of on Labor’s website, the most popular response was that they’d like to see more information about our policies (65.66%).

**Party Participation**

Another topic that had strong support in the survey results is the importance of meaningful party participation to our supporters.

During the 2013 election, 29.76% of respondents reported they had volunteered, with 80.69% of those people saying that they had handed out ‘How to vote’ cards on Election Day. This use of volunteers greatly shadowed the next most popular use of volunteers, which was to get them to letterbox (37.39%).
While only 29.76% of respondents reported having volunteered at the 2013 Federal Election, 67.73% of people reported wanting to volunteer in the future. When willing volunteers were asked which campaigning activities they’d most likely agree to do, they elected handing out How to Vote cards (61.10%), developing or participating in the Party’s policy processes (49.82%), sharing information about Labor online (39.29%), or staffing a campaign office (36.95%).

This disparity between what volunteers are being asked to do and what they would like to do, ignoring handing out How to Vote cards, indicates that we could more effectively engage with volunteers and that having a substantial engagement with issues and the Party is of value to supporters.

The importance of participation to supporters was also shown when they were asked what they would like to see more of in the Labor Party. The top two requests were for there to be more discussion & say on ALP policy (57.17%) and for members to have more say over who their elected representatives are (43.48%).

In addition to this, when asked about the member’s ballot for the election of the leader of the Labor Party, there was overwhelming support for members having a vote (93.89%), which indicates that past reforms that increase the voice of general members in the Party are a firm step towards increasing meaningful and engaging supporter participation in the Party.

**Conclusion**

One of the main points to take out of the 2014 Vision for Australia Survey of Labor supporters is the importance of substantial engagement with supporters on the issues of policy & representation. Supporters frequently highlighted their desire to engage with Labor in terms of policy discussion, and choosing who their elected representatives.

The policy areas of importance to supporters, namely healthcare, climate change, the NBN & schools funding, were policy areas already championed by the Party. Opening up the election of the leader of the Labor Party to members was also viewed favourably by supporters, and indicates that efforts already taken to engage with members in a substantial manner are a first step on the path to meaningful and productive supporter engagement.