AiP

Australian Institute for Progress

Victorian Election 2018: Exit Poll

Methodology

The following graphs are based on two virtual focus groups. The first of 90 voters in this year's Victorian election which was selected from a larger group of 186 respondents to reflect voting intentions based on the results of the election as displayed on the Victorian Electoral Commission's website on Monday November 26, 2018.

The second from responses to a previous survey undertaken between November 10 and November 16, 2018 resulting in a virtual focus group of 100. Details of that report can be downloaded from here[1].

Results should be taken as indicative in that the sample is not properly randomised, but it is unlikely that groups are completely unrepresentative.

The second poll was conducted from Saturday November 24 through to Sunday November 25, 2018 using our online panel of over 13,000 Australian voters.

Quantitative analysis was undertaken using Microsoft Excel. Qualitative analysis was undertaken using Leximancer.

For further information contact Graham Young 0411 104 801.

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[1]https://aip.asn.au/2018/11/qualitative-polling-on-victorian-election/

Executive Summary

Mixed and baked in Victoria

Daniel Andrews' boil-over result in Victoria was unheralded by any of the polling organisations, including ours. This is probably a result of a significant part of the swing occurring late in the election.

In our initial analysis we relied on Newspoll for voting intention across the whole population, which at that stage last polled Victoria in April 2018[2]. They had the figures 51/49 to Labor on a two-party preferred basis. 4 months later in August, YouGov came to a similar conclusion[3]. On election eve Newspoll called it 53/47 to Labor[4]. Roy Morgan had the result 55/45 on election eve[5].

The Victorian Electoral Commission hasn't done a notional two-party preferred distribution, but averaging the swing in those seats which were determined between Labor and the coalition, the swing is somewhere in the vicinity of 6%, which will make the two-party preferred result 58/42.

When we distribute preferences on our straw poll, weighting respondents for their first preference votes according to the actual election results, we get a 61/39 two-party preferred result. This suggests that the weighted quants are fairly close to what actually happened, although leaning fractionally more to the left, giving reasonable confidence that they will also fairly accurately reflect moves in approval of the leaders etc.

During the last two weeks net approval (approval minus disapproval) of premier Daniel Andrews rose from -1.0% to +21.0% while the same figures for opposition leader Matthew Guy were -24% and -51%. In our first poll 55% preferred Daniel Andrews as premier. In the second poll it had risen to 61%. At the same time Victorians were happier with the direction of the state with a net 28% believing it was heading in the right direction compared to only a net 6% at the beginning.

A big contributor to this was a deterioration in Matthew Guy's standing with Liberal and National Party voters. In the beginning he had 49% net approval from Liberal Nationals. By the end it was only 11%. He lost his base.

The shock result has been used by both parties at a federal level to try to shape perceptions of federal politics. While federal issues played some part in some voters' decisions, it was only very minor.

We did a word search for "Turnbull" over both sets of responses and came up with only one mention. We used "disunit" to search for "disunity" and "disunited". Again only one mention. "Federal" was mentioned 38 times, but only 14 of these reflected on the federal government in a way that could be connected with Turnbull. "Divi" for "divided", "division" etc picked-up one response. If federal factors were a significant cause of this result, there should have been a lot more than this.

So what were the drivers?

[2] https://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/newspoll/vic
[3] https://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/victoria/labor-ahead-of-the-coalition-on-a-twoparty-preferred-basis-ahead-of-state-election-yougov-galaxy-poll-finds/news-story/409fa36261c1c3c7457b0a10d8e792f8
[4] https://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/state-politics/victorian-election-labor-on-track-for-poll-victory-newspoll-finds/news-story/d73e69e8ea255a3f08c1b7cd7c5db0b5
[5] http://www.roymorgan.com/findings/7814-victorian-election-eve-poll-november-23-2018-201811230831

At the start of the campaign the best you could say for Andrews was that people tolerated him. That changed during the campaign, and I think hinged on two perceptions – people saw that he was actually doing things (encapsulated in his theme "I say what I do, and do what I say", and proven by the elimination of numbers of railway level crossings) and that he was progressive.

Being progressive seemed to resolve in Labor and Greens voters' minds to climate change, voluntary euthanasia and safe injecting rooms. For Liberal National voters it was more the safe schools program.

As a brand, Labor has the high ground on climate change, so it would be difficult for the Liberal Nationals to win with people who have that as a high concern.

Voluntary euthanasia is an interesting issue. While Daniel Andrews drove the issue, it was dealt with as a conscience vote, so there were MPs from both sides voting for and against it. Nevertheless most respondents saw it in party terms.

However, eye-balling the data for swings, it is hard to pick up any electoral effect due to VE. As it was a conscience vote, there are members of each party who voted against the majority of their colleagues. This makes it potentially possible to control for party affiliation to see whether the issue on its own had an effect. When you look at Liberal, Louise Staley, the member for Ripon, who voted for VE and had the smallest swing against her of just 0.8% you might think her vote saved her. But then, on the other side you have Labor's Tim Richardson who voted against the VE bill and yet had a swing to him of 10.9%.

The Liberals were hampered by the record of the Baillieu government, which was perceived as doing nothing for its 4 year term. So their promises of car and bus tunnels, and the elimination of a number of traffic intersections, meant much less than Andrews' underground train.

The trains were public transport, which voters like, and thy were effectively being asked to choose between a project by Daniel Andrews, which his track record said he was likely to deliver, and a project by Matthew Guy, which the Liberals' track record said he was likely to botch.

The infrastructure argument was mostly about urban congestion, and here Matthew Guy was at a disadvantage because as the planning minister in the Baillieu and Napthine governments he was responsible for much of the densification that Melburnians hate. Respondents thought it was poorly planned, favoured rich donors, and destroyed the character of the city.

When congestion as a result of population growth is an issue, the man who increased urban densities massively is likely to get the blame rather than the benefit.

Respondents also mentioned health and education as important priorities, and believed that Labor would be more likely to deliver than the Liberals. This perception was partly driven by memories of the Kennett government, who actually closed schools as part of their budget repair.

One of the negative perceptions around Andrews was the "red-shirts" affair, where Labor members had illegally put campaigners onto their staff payrolls. Liberal and National voters cited this as a reason for not voting for Andrews, but for many respondents it was negated by the perception that Guy was corrupt as well.

Guy ran a small target strategy, leading a lot of respondents to feel that they didn't know him. A number also complained that he would not defend his position. The Liberal Nationals campaign was largely negative and focussed on crime.

But this seems to have been too shrill. It was also coloured by the terror attack in the Bourke Street mall. Many respondents thought the Liberal response was "dog whistling".

To sum up. The Liberal campaign didn't offer a reason to respondents to change their vote, and Matthew Guy was not seen as a capable leader, including by his own base. Daniel Andrews solidified his position, and was able to convert voters during the campaign, so that he ended the election with an enhanced reputation. He had a plan and was offering bread and butter policies that our respondents liked. Guy couldn't convince respondents that he would deliver, or that he was trying to do more than scare voters into voting for him. Andrews met respondents' expectations of integrity while Guy seemed shifty. In the end the election was a confirmation of the direction in which Andrews is taking Victoria, magnified by being combined with a severe judgment of the state Liberal Party.

Specific findings were:

1. By the end of the campaign a net 28% of voters thought the state was heading in the right direction.
2. Daniel Andrews had improved his net approval rating from -1% to +21%, a very significant move.
3. Matthew Guy's net approval rating dived from -24% to -51%.
4. Daniel Andrews moved from being preferred premier by 55% to 61% during the course of the election. Matthew Guy therefore moved from 45% down to 39%
5. Strongest qualitative factors for Andrews were infrastructure and progressiveness, combined with a belief that he would deliver.
6. Strongest qualitative factors for Matthew Guy were his positions on crime and cultural issues like safe schools.
7. Andrews had some negatives, including the "red shirts" affair, but they were cancelled out as a vote changing issue by a suspicion that Matthew Guy gained from rezoning land for developer supporters of the Liberal Party

Quantitative Analysis

No one predicted the swing that the Andrew's government received which was in the order of 6% two-party preferred. (This is an approximate figure because the electoral commission has not completed a notional two-party preferred distribution, and a number of the seats are being decided between Greens and the ALP, Independents and the Nationals and Independents and other Independents). We have obtained this figure by taking the average swing in the seats where the Liberal and Labor Parties were the last two parties left. This indicates that the 2PP result is somewhere in the order of 58% to the Labor Party.
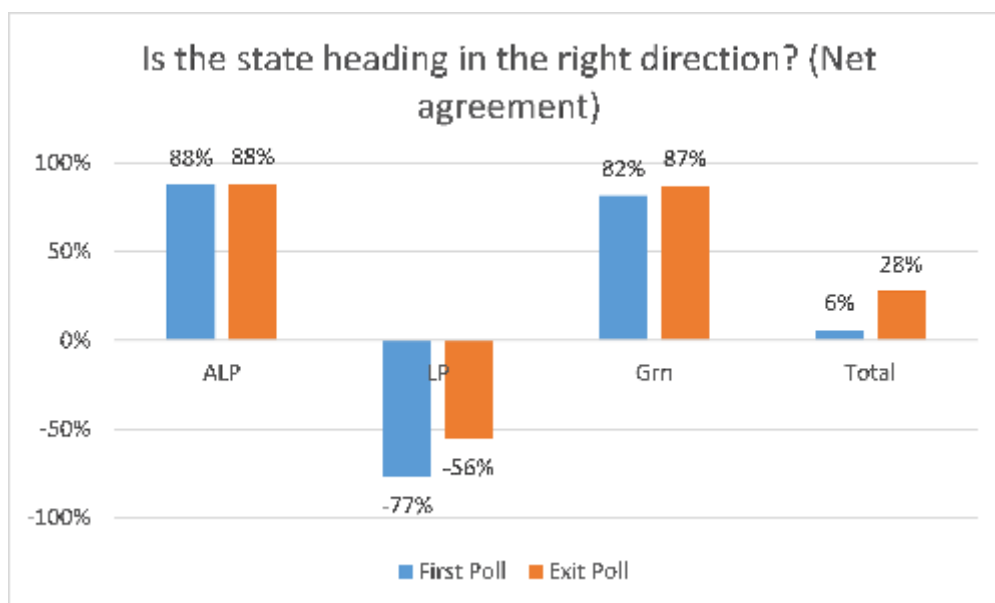
Our sample shows a bias towards the left. Results have been weighted to deal with this, but there is still some bias apparent. For example when we weight using the actual election results, and then calculate preferences we get this table which is 3 percentage points better for Labor than the actual result and shows that our minor party and independent voters were more left-aligned in our sample than in the community at large.

2PP	ALP	Lib Nat	Grn	Other	Total
Australian Labor Party	97%	3%	97%	71%	61%
Liberal Nationals	3%	97%	3%	29%	39%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

The swing also seems to have developed very late in the campaign. In the last week YouGov Galaxy polling was predicting a 53/47 two-party preferred break and Reachtel 54/46. They were out 5 and 4 per cent respectively.
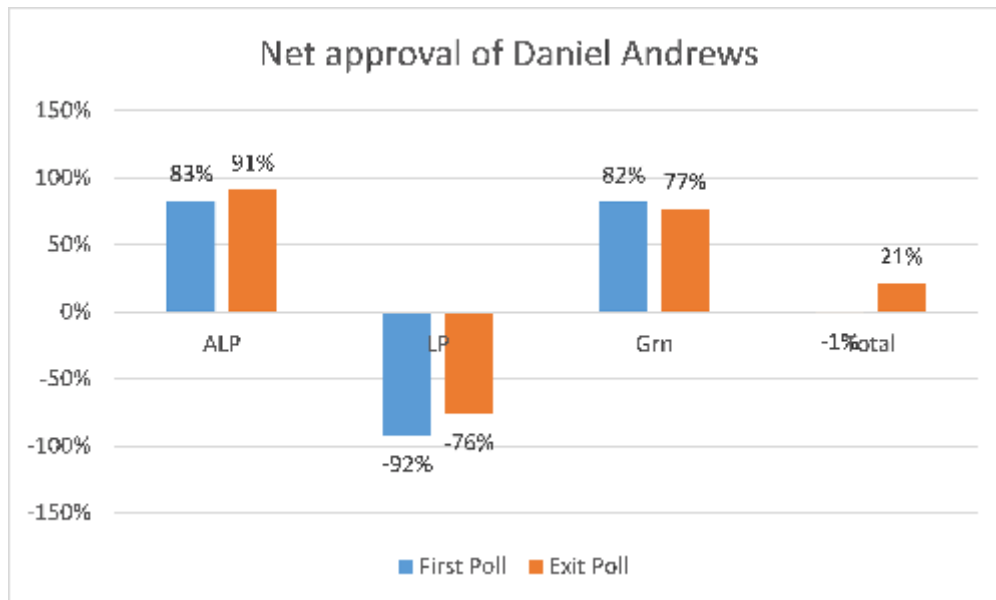
The graphs below compare our first poll with our second poll and tell the story of the campaign.

Thinking about Victoria how strongly would you agree or disagree that the state is heading in the right direction?
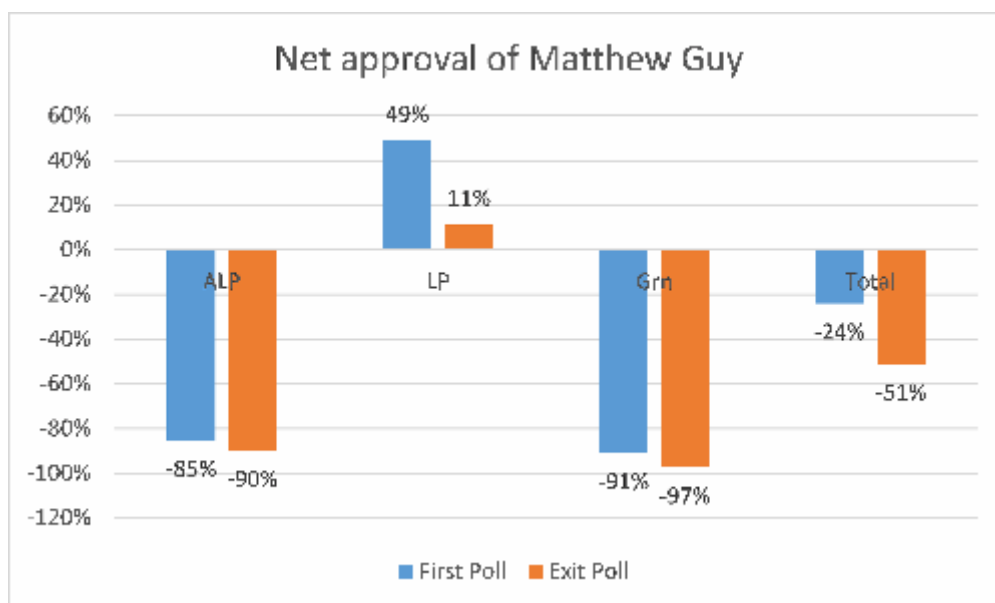
Most voters were happy with the direction in which the state is heading. This is rare. Even 18% of Liberal Nationals agreed, with 9% being neutral.

Thinking about your opinion in general of the performance of Premier Daniel Andrews how strongly do you approve or disapprove of it?

There was a massive turn-around in the approval of Matthew Guy, mainly amongst Labor voters, and also amongst Liberals.
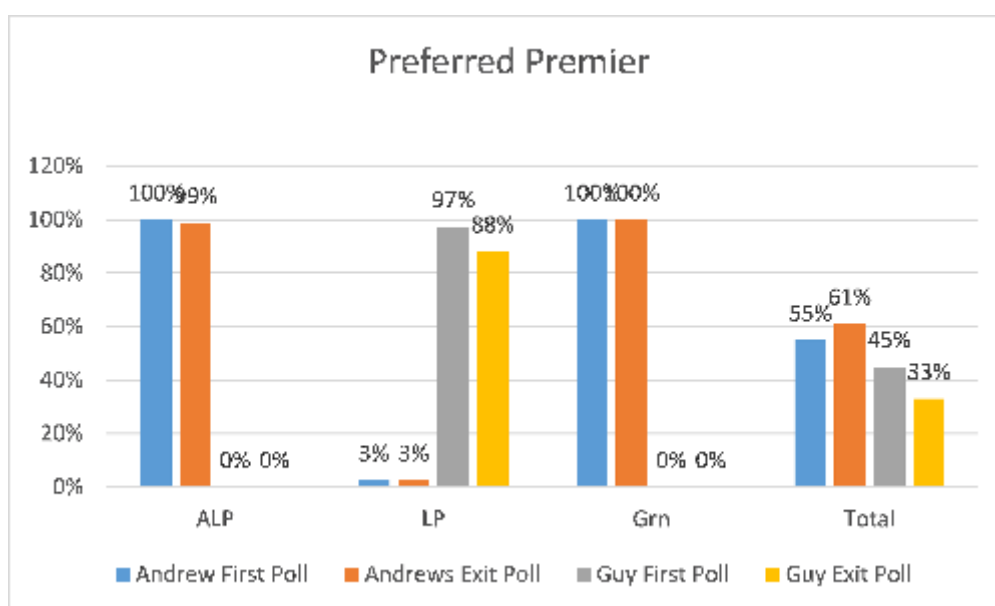
Thinking about your opinion in general of the performance of Opposition Leader Matthew Guy, how strongly do you approve or disapprove of it?

Guy's performance was such that he had Liberal voters turning on him with their net approval rating of him at 11%. You can't win an election when you don't have your base.

Who is your preferred premier?

Andrews' approval went up slightly during the campaign (although had limited room to move amongst Labor and Greens voters). Guy's went down substantially, including amongst Liberal voters.

In summary, Andrews grew in stature during the election, particularly right at the end, and Guy diminished.

The reasons for this are revealed in the qualitative polling.
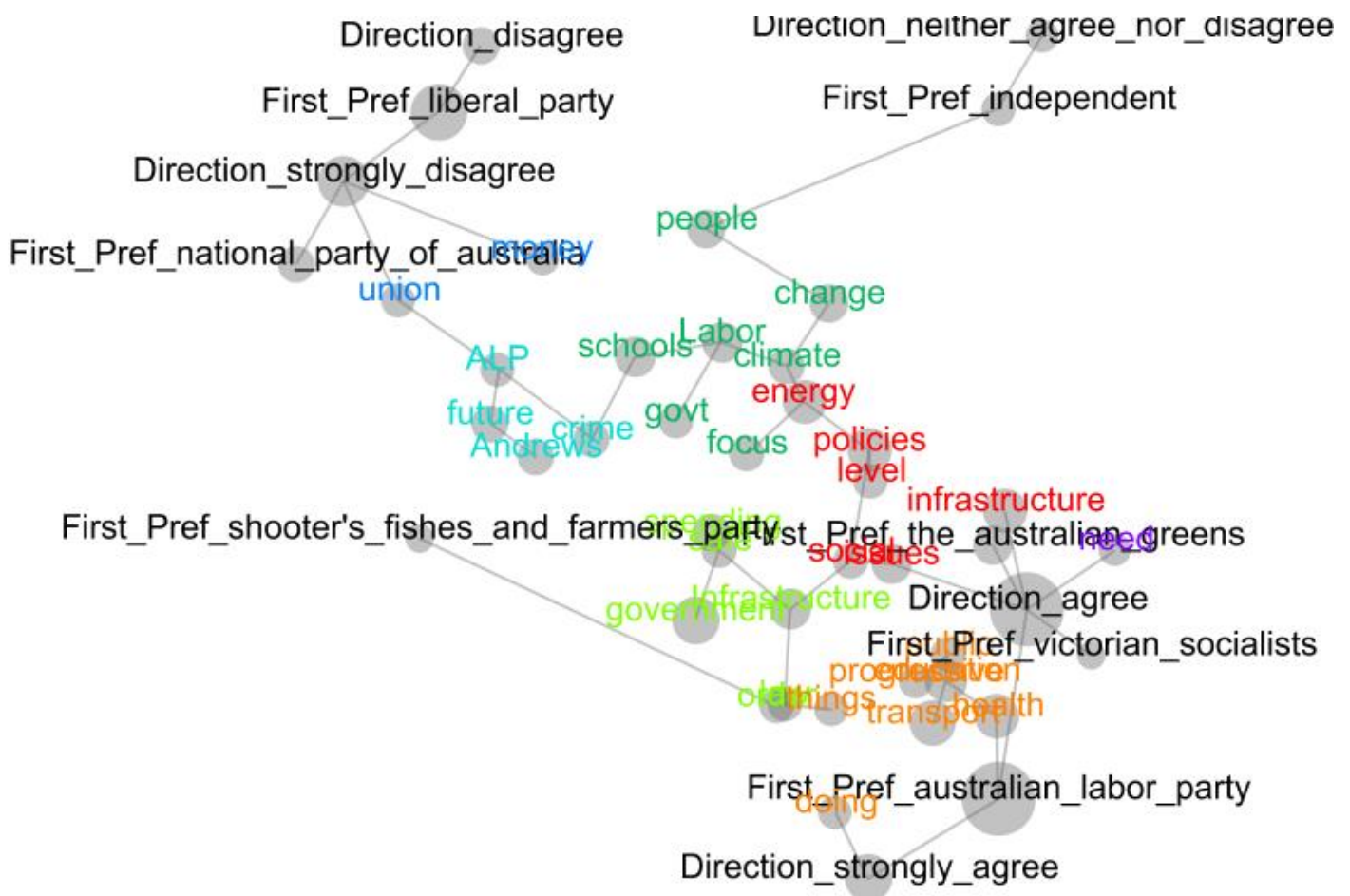
Qualitative Analysis

Our qualitative analysis looks at the reasons given by respondents for their various judgements. The following maps are generated from the data by Leximancer and overlay the key words over the variables from the question – generally the answer to the question plus voting intentions. Words that are most closely associated will cluster together. The most frequently used words are brighter than those used less frequently.

We do not edit the verbatims and all spelling and grammatical errors are reproduced. Editing the transcripts would take away from some of the unique tone of each response. The verbatims are selected so as to give a better insight into how the individual words are being used.

But before looking at the maps we also did a word search to determine how much of an effect the deposing of Malcolm Turnbull had on the result. If it was a significant issue, then it should have been mentioned by a reasonable number of respondents. In fact, a word search of "Turnbull" over both surveys returned only one occurrence. "Disunit" had one mention. "Federal" was mentioned 38 times, but only 14 of these reflected on the federal government in a way that could be connected to Turnbull even generally. "Divi" picked-up one response.

Whatever is being said, this election was definitely baked in Victoria.

Thinking about Victoria how strongly would you agree or disagree that the state is heading in the right direction?

Verbatims

> **Economically** *the State finances are heavily based on a) the property boom but home prices are stagnant-declining b) industrial prosperity but environmental policies (climate change) are attacking our industrial capacity and energy supplies On another level, the present government is weakening the moral fibre of the people via contentious policies in our schools (***Safe Schools** *and similar) and condoning weak responses. to criminals and terrorists.*

> **Soft** *on crime - a* **Labor** *bastardised judiciary - closed* **Hazelwood** *early - too many ugly token wind farms -* **Union** *corruption - too much union focus-* `ALP MP` *corruption and graft.* **Infrastructure** *spending for* `CFMEU` *at exorbitant cost - lies and disgusting safe schools.*

> **Progressive** *approach to drug reform* **Progressive** *moves on dying with dignity* **Infrastructure** *spending* **Spending** *on education and transport* **Support** *lgbt community including safe schools* **Safe** *injecting rooms*
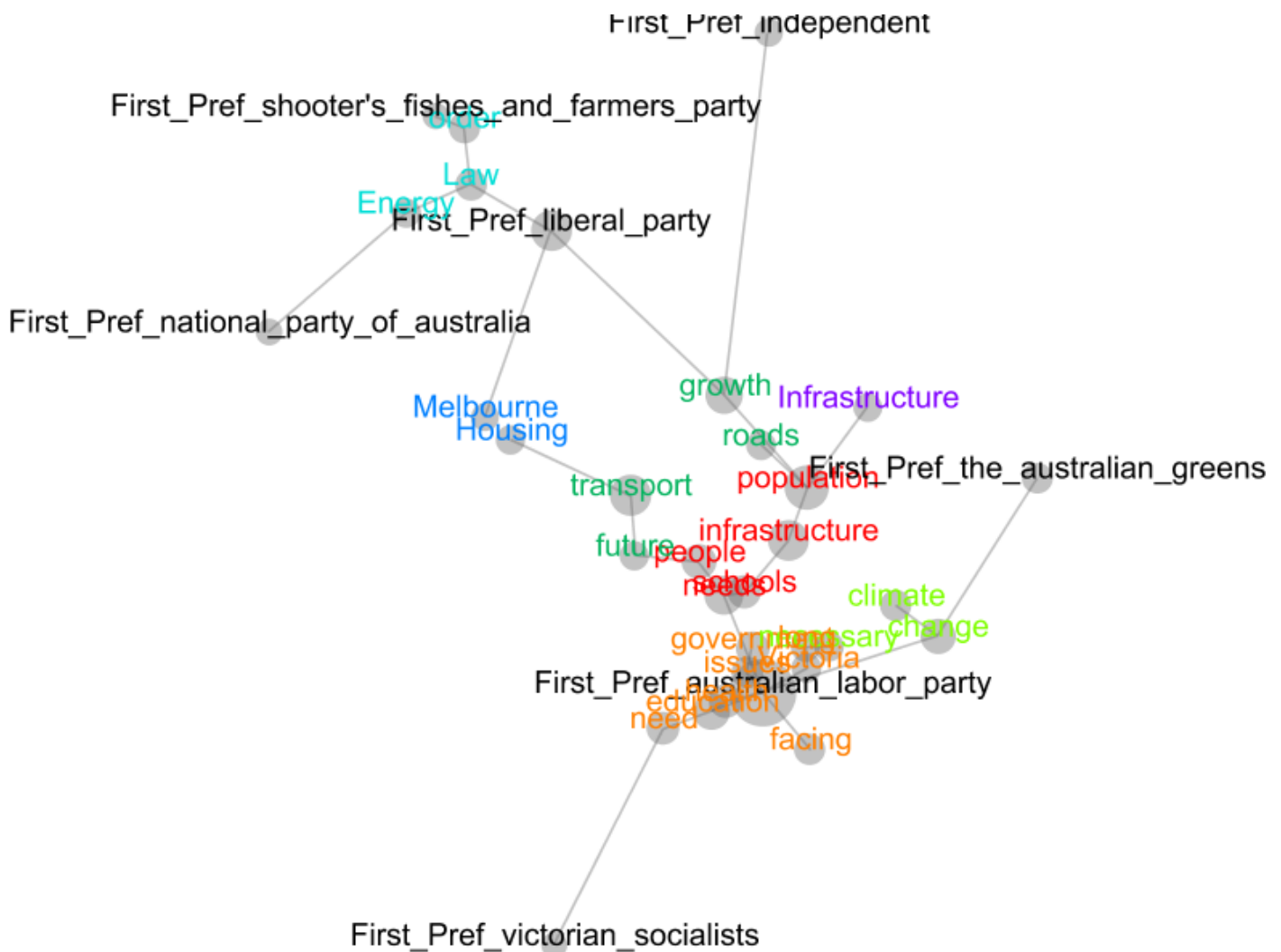
> *After the dithering around of the* **Napthine** *government, the current government is just getting things done that have been neglected for decades, especially in the transport area. I also would not vote for the coalition because of its resort to dog whistles on law and order,* **African** *crime, and other matters.*

Investment *in infrastructure, but more importantly public transport over roads.* **Recognising** *the pluralism in our society and recognising the call by the constituents for progressive policies like* **Safe Access Zones***,* **Voluntary Assisted Dying** *and a* **Medically Supervised Injecting Centre** *trial.*

The **Andrews** *government is the most progressive in* **Australia** *and doesn t play the race card. The focus is on hospitals, schools and renewable energy.*

The government has done many great things over its first term. Both from the infrastructure developments with so many level crossing removed, so great initiatives such as dying with dignity, the safe injecting room and the exclusion zones around family planning clinics.

Thinking about Victoria again, in a short paragraph please tell us what is the most important issue facing the state.

Verbatims

Victoria *has had an ongoing high immigration rate and the state needs to build and modernise it's infrastructure to cope with it's swelling population. The infrastructure build has been necessary and has made some improvements with more to come but the government needs to ensure that in the long term the state doesn't fall into deep debt.*

Continuity *of a government that can follow through a planned agenda to manage the economy while addressing the issues facing the state such as education toon, health and housing.*
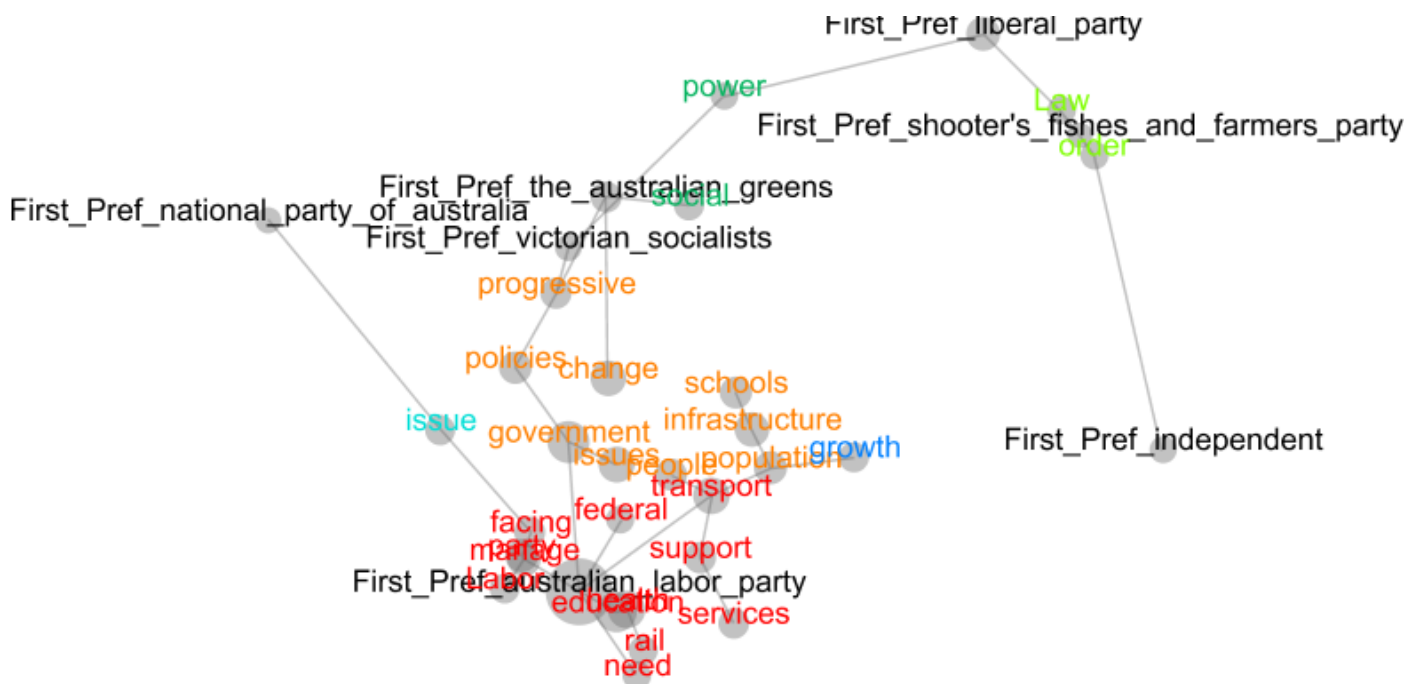
I think big issues are infrastructure and planning for growth. This would include health and education.

Mitigating *climate change is the most important issue facing all people*

Being able to circumnavigate the city on public transport is essential for the future. We also need to get people out of their cars and to do this, public transport needs to become a better option.

Stop *schools indoctrinating children to believe in climate change caused by man .To many immigrants causing infrastructure overload.*

Thinking about your vote in this election, in a short paragraph please tell us what issue will affect your vote the most.

Verbatims

As our population is increasing so much and people are moving to ouer suburbs there needs to be the infrastructure to support them - medical/hispital, schools and reliable transport.

Anyone but **Matthew Guy** and his policies of ideology over evidence, but also rewarding the **Andrews** government for working with **Fiona Patten** on progressive social issues.

Climate change and how to manage that without the **Federal Govt** who are sitting on their hands and patting themselves on the back for their nonexistent contribution. **Bring** on the **Ferral** election and I hope when the **Labor** party gets in they will do what's necessary to get back on track.

Labor's promise of continuing support for health and education services and the ongoing improvement in road and rail provision

Transport issues are a huge concern across the state with roads being very busy and peak hour now extending from 3pm to 7pm. There needs to be better alternatives, faster rail links from regional centres and buses from outlying areas to train stations.
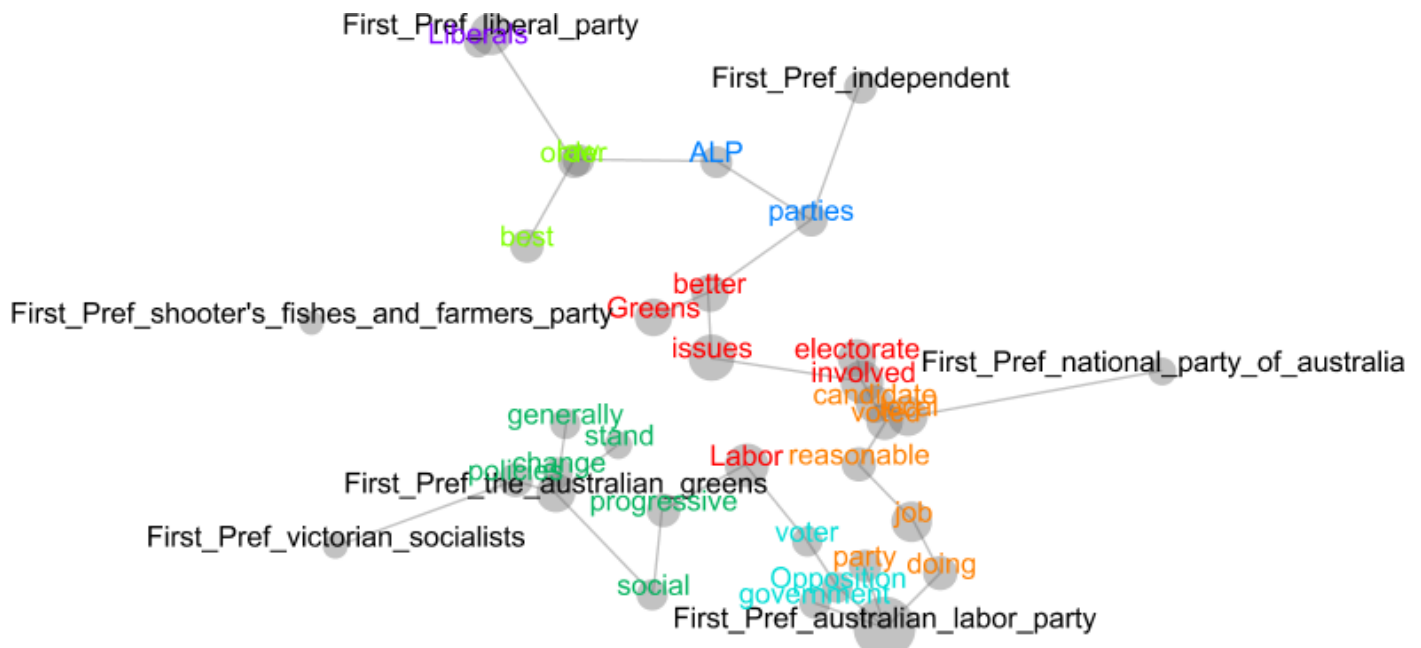
Climate change, especially in the face of federal inaction and obfuscation. By concentrating on renewables projects for the **Latrobe Valley**, solar panels, and prioritising public transport etc the current govt seem to be confronting the matter regardless of federal failure in the area.

Law n order - gangs, congestion on public transport, dishonesty and incompetence of the labour members

Law and **Order**, **Housing** affordability, **Population** growth

Build a new coal or gas fired power station. **Allow** drilling and fracking to supply our energy.

Thinking about your vote this election, which of the following parties will receive your first preference?

Verbatims

> I'm heavily involved with the party and know the candidate. Our electorate had been slowly moving from **Dave** liberal to marginal but the liberal members still think they can ignore the people who live here.
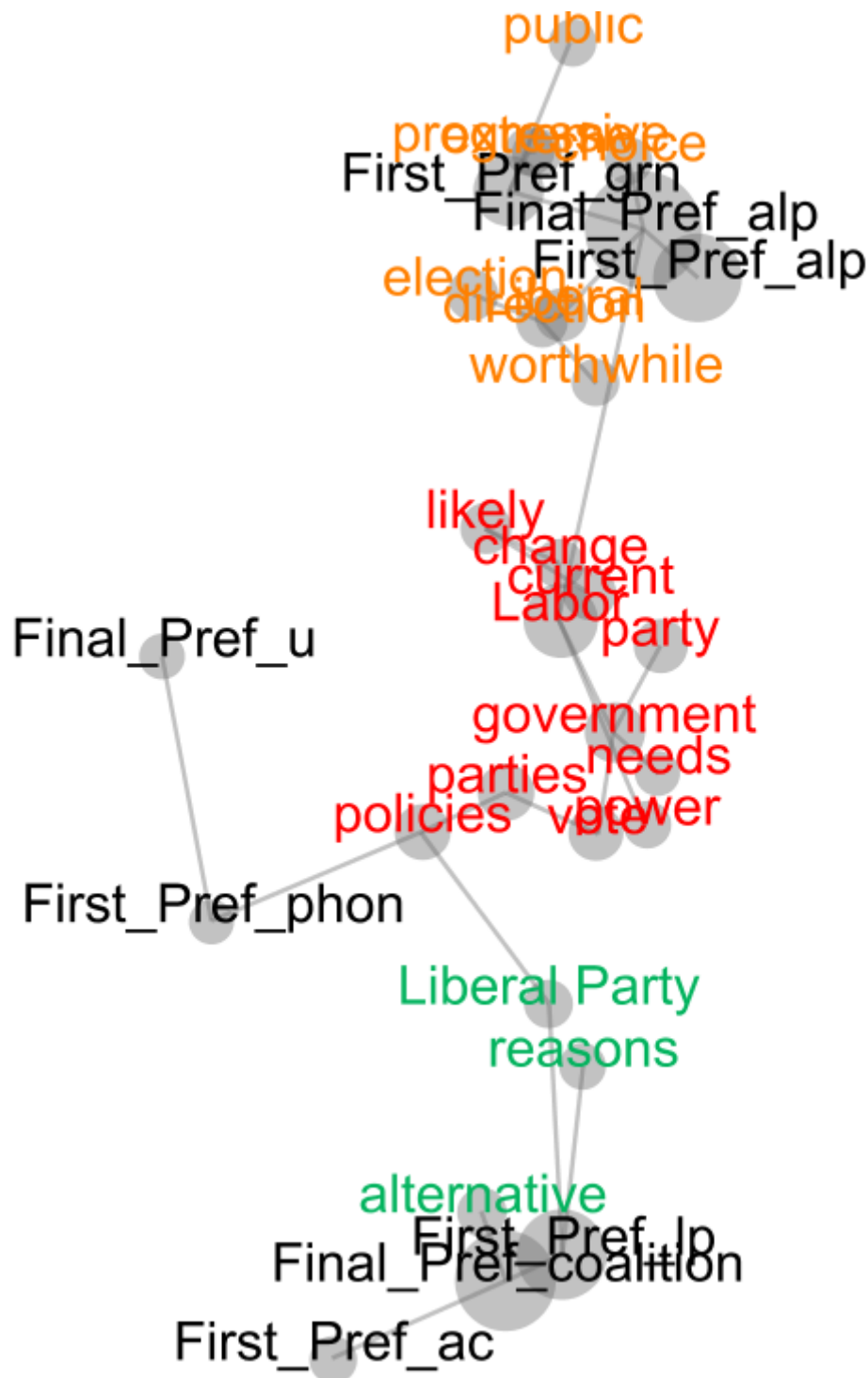
> I voted liberal in the lower house because in my electorate there were no reasonable alternatives to the two major parties. Had a good independent been standing I would have voted for him/her

> better than **Labor** on climate change, housing/homelessness, duck shooting, and generally more progressive

> Within the choices among four candidates (**Liberal**, **Greens**, *ALP* and **Transport Matters**) they represented the best possibility of dealing with law and order and energy issues, then pro-life issues

> They've delivered a range of infrastructure projects that are critical for a growing city. They are also pushing socially progressive policies without all the identity politics of the **Greens**.

Thinking about your vote this election for the Legislative Assembly, which party or group of parties, Labor or Liberal Nationals, will you direct your preferences to favour - that is, which would you prefer to form the government?

Verbatims

> *As stated above i object to the* **Federal Government's** *protection of the endemic corruption of the banking and financial sector, the minor parties and independents are not able to address the issue and that leaves* **Labor** *if they have the will.*

Rewarding the Andrews *government for working with* **Fiona Patten** *on progressive social issues.*

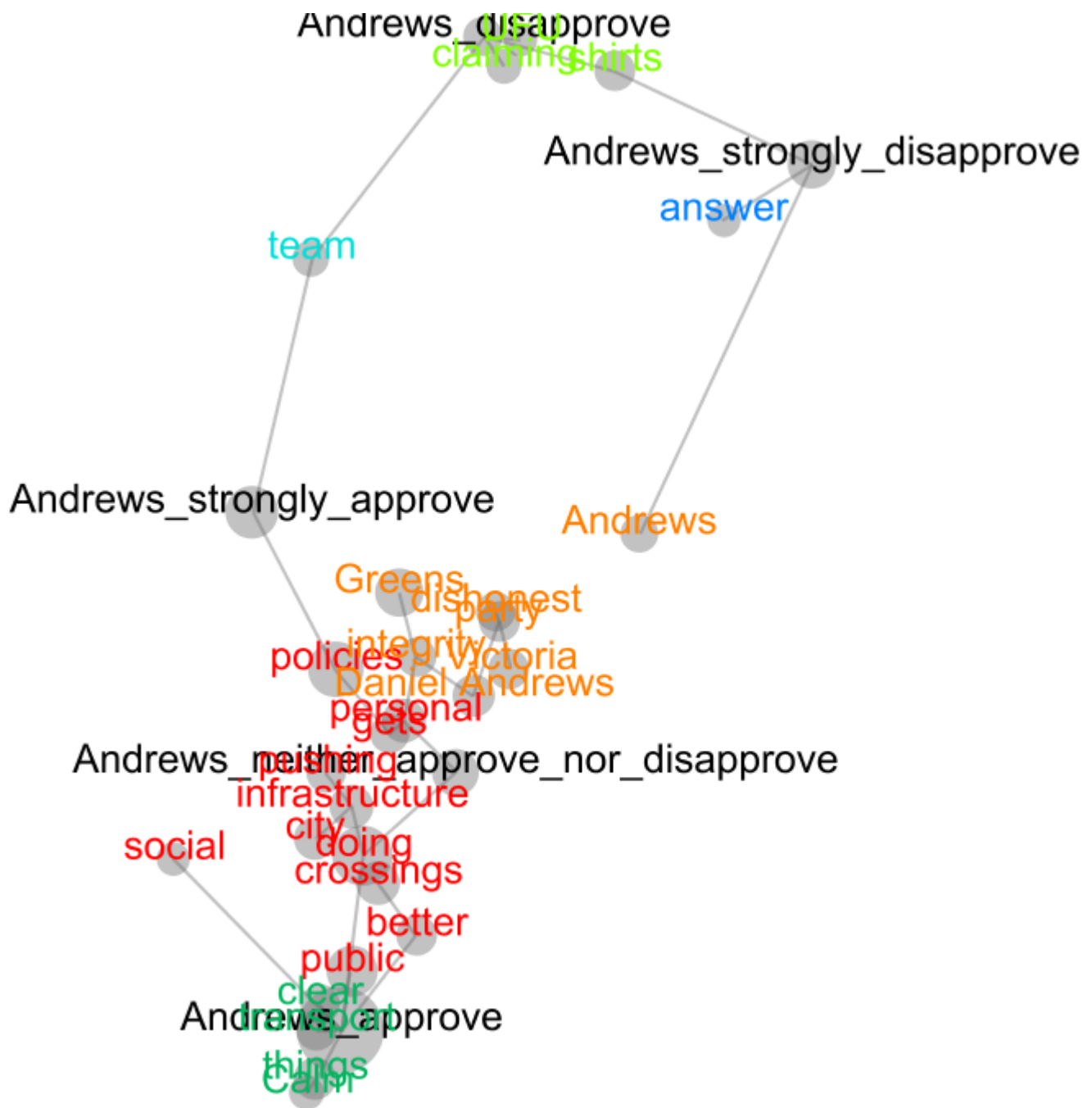*To allow the* **Labor** *government to pass the necessary legislation*

I trust this government to deliver via due dilegence . So voted for them upper and lower to give them clear passage to pass laws.

They have a clear policy on crime

Debt *is rising, cash is being promised irresponsibly,* **Daniel Andrews** *can't be trusted (***Red Shirts***,* CFA*, union ties etc)*

Liberals *are a poor choice but hopefully honest*

Thinking about your opinion in general of the performance of Premier Daniel Andrews how strongly do you approve or disapprove of it?

Verbatims

Some solid positives, some *Labor* party machine negatives. *Daniel Andrews* is doing a generally good job, but compromised on personal integrity, his party are ruthless and dishonest in attacking The *Greens*.

Not flashy, just quietly getting on with the job. There's loads of construction all over the city and it's clear and obvious what is being done and why eg metro tunnel - improve public transport.

He has delivered a range of infrastructure projects that are critical for a growing city. He is pushing socially progressive policies without all the identity politics of the *Greens*.
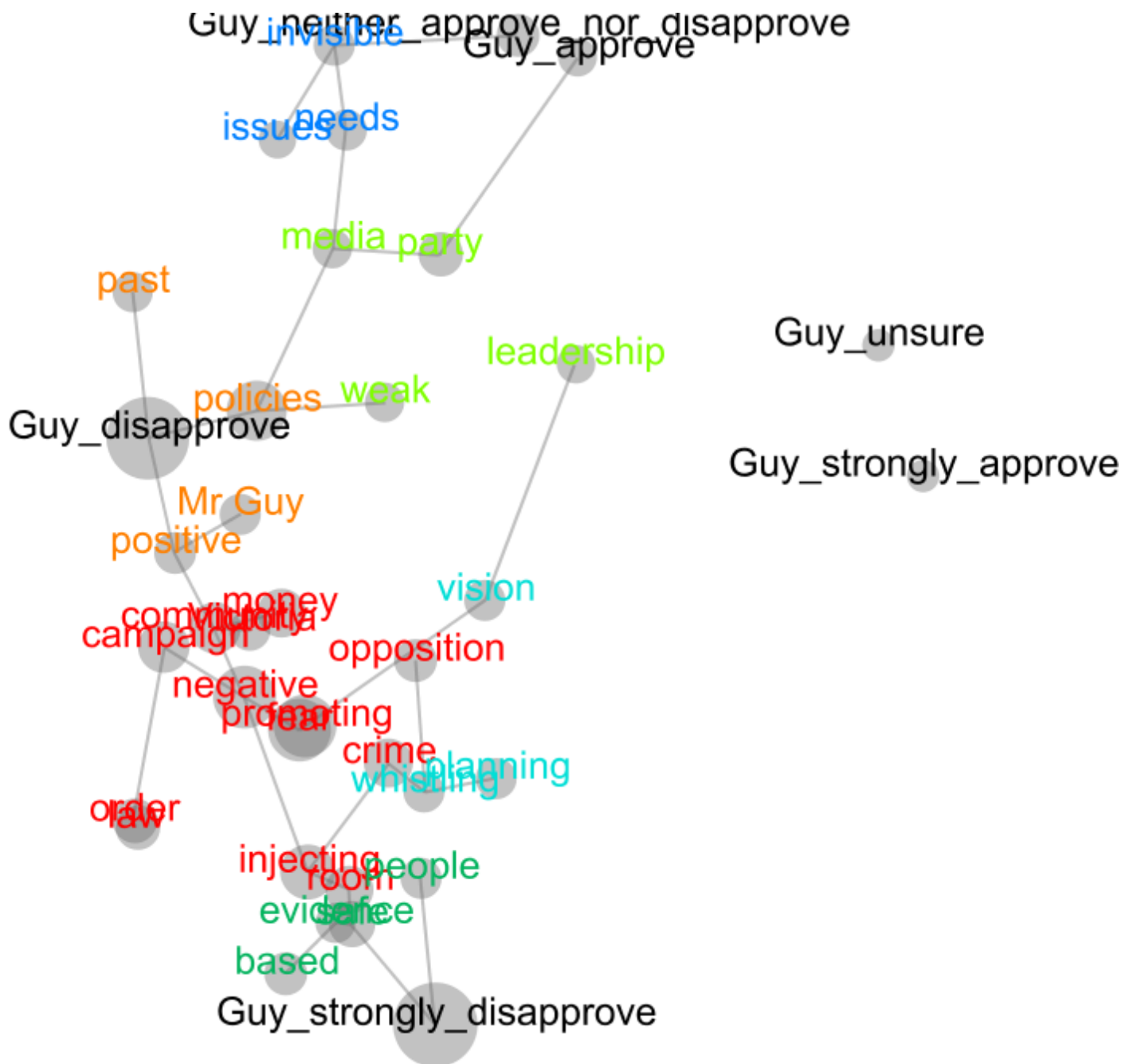
money wasted on *East-West* link, *Red* shirts rort, member claiming allowance living on caravan park, support for `UFU`, support for `CFMEU`.

I'm happy with the removal of level crossings and hope the road and rail works are carried out. On a personal level I have no opinion about him.

As mentioned above he did get things like railway crossings done but he also advocated euthanasia,so called *Safe Schools* pushing an agenda that sexualises children from an early age.

Level crossings - public safety and better traffic management. Good policies setting *Victoria* up for the future.

Thinking about your opinion in general of the performance of Opposition Leader Matthew Guy, how strongly do you approve or disapprove of it?

Verbatims

> *He promoted fear and division and his intentions were not evidence based (e.g., to close down the* **Richmond** *safe injecting room trial and to create grade separations at major intersections, apparently without obtaining expert advice that this is the most cost-effective choice for improving metro* **Melbourne's** *transport infrastructure.*

> **False** *crime beat up, east west link is a waste of money, negative style, and the removal of the safe injection room will achieve nothing but more deaths. Very poor performance*

Dog whistling the Morrisson Crime = Islam so lets lock 'em all up and throw away the key....and his negative stance on the injecting room in opposition to the local school,the local police, the local health workers when he didnt even run a local Liberal candidate.
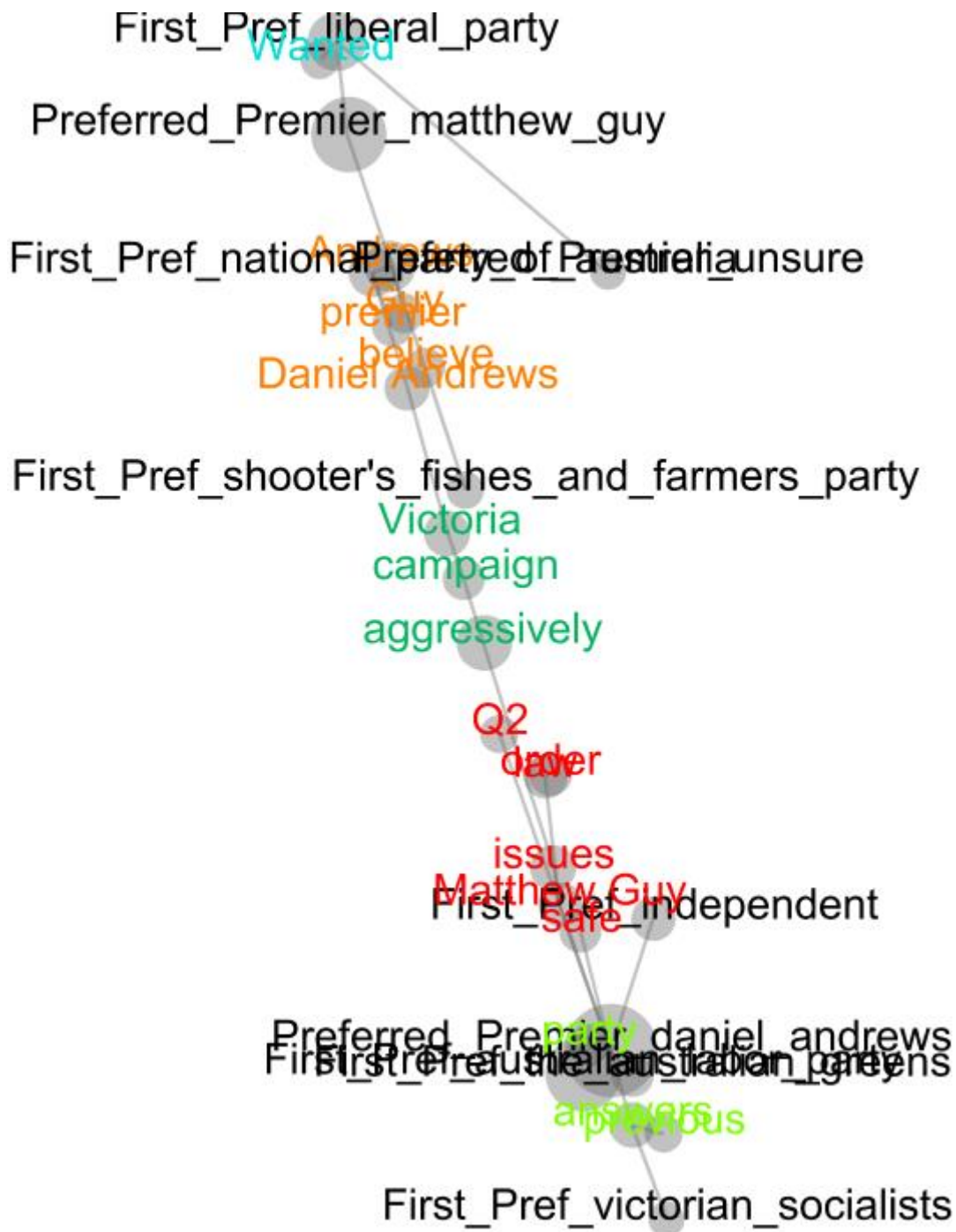
Actually he mounted a generally responsible campaign, and actually offered some positive ideas (rare for the Libs). He appears to personally be a decent enough person - but he is also responsible for dirty dealings as Planning Minister in the past, and like all Libs, happy to take money from any crook.

I don't believe he has formulated well conceived policies and I dislike his promoting fear in the community. He is more negative than constructive.

Lib policies are good but Mr Guy did not campaign aggressively enough

he was a shocker as the minister for high rise but might grow into the leadership role.

Who is your preferred premier?

First_Pref_liberal_party

Wanted

Preferred_Premier_matthew_guy

First_Pref_national_party_of_australia unsure

Andrewsyeof Prestmeial

premier

Guy

believe

Daniel Andrews

First_Pref_shooter's_fishes_and_farmers_party

Victoria

campaign

aggressively

Q2

dader

issues

Matthew Guy

First_Pref_independent

safe

Preferred_Prep party daniel_andrews

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answers

previous

First_Pref_victorian_socialists

Verbatims

Daniel Andrews has a track record of performing well for **Victoria** of fulfilling promises and taking action. **Matthew Guy** has a record of being central to issues that have been good for the rich but not for the poor.

Lib policies are good but **Mr Guy** did not campaign aggressively enough. **Andrews** is the worst premier **Victoria** has had.

Less obsessed with law and order, and has achieved safe injecting room, dying with dignity legislation, free **TAFE** courses, and some other reasonable social reforms.

Labor has many good ideas, is a party of social change for the community, serious about acting on climate change. The *Libs* have presented some good ideas, but basically a party of protecting and boosting the wealthy, as well as being basically oblivious to critical issues such as climate change.

Matthew Guy had no vision, and played low politics with a law and order bent. *Dan Andrews* has made a difference in four years, he deserves more.

I was appalled at the divisive nature of his campaign against *Sudanese*youths. I live in *Southbank* and I go out into the city or *Southbank*every night yet he was telling me that it wasn't safe.