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## Media release

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### **Preaching to the Converted Who Listens to Alan Jones?**

The widespread belief among Australia's political elite that breakfast radio talkback king Alan Jones can influence election outcomes is a myth based more on fear of on-air criticism than his real ability to shift votes.

A study by the public interest think tank the Australia Institute demonstrates that perceptions of Jones' influence and political sway are disproportionate to the size and nature of his audience, according to Institute Director and author of the study Dr Clive Hamilton.

Drawing on demographic and attitudinal data from an extensive survey of nearly 25,000 Australians by Roy Morgan Research, the study examines the characteristics of Alan Jones' listeners and compares them with those of all Australians over 14.

"Analysis of the data shows that Jones is preaching to the converted," Dr Hamilton said. "In keeping with his own stand on issues, his listeners are much more conservative and authoritarian in their views than other Australians.

"Moreover, his audience is small - about the same as a low-rating television program - and highly concentrated among older listeners with well-established and inflexible political allegiances.

"This suggests that Alan Jones' influence is based more on fear of on-air criticism than a real ability to change his listeners' votes."

The study finds that 68 per cent of Jones' listeners are over 50 compared to 37 per cent of the entire population over 14. Most are pensioners or on average incomes and are more likely to be religious than other Australians.

Seventy seven per cent of his listeners believe that the fundamental values of 'our society' are under threat compared to 66 per cent of all Australians. Only 13 per cent of Jones' listeners believe in adoption rights for gay couples compared to 37 per cent of all others.

Jones' frequent beating of the law and order drum mirrors the fearfulness of his listeners; 68 per cent say they feel less safe than they used to, compared to 49 per cent of all Australians, and they are more likely to believe that crime is growing.

Jones' listeners are twice as likely as other Australians to vote for the Federal Coalition with 65 per cent saying they give their first preference to the Liberal Party.

*The report may be read under "What's New" on the Australia Institute's website -  
[www.tai.org.au](http://www.tai.org.au).*