



**VOTER TURNOUT IN THE  
2011 PROVINCIAL ELECTION:  
A SURVEY OF VOTERS AND NON-VOTERS**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Elections Manitoba engaged PRA Inc. to conduct a study of voter turnout in the October 2011 provincial election. PRA conducted a random sample survey of two groups of Manitobans: those who voted and those who did not vote in the 2011 provincial election.

Similar surveys were conducted by PRA for Elections Manitoba following the 2007 and 2003 provincial elections, and these previous surveys were the basis for the questionnaire used in 2011. This study involved a random sample telephone survey of adult Manitobans who were eligible and voted (n=403) or did not vote (n=400) in the October 2011 provincial election.

### **Characteristics of voters and non-voters**

Voters and non-voters share many characteristics. However, compared to voters, non-voters tend to be younger and come from households with children under 18 years of age. They are also more likely than voters to come from households where other members also do not vote.

Non-voters tend to fall into two groups: persistent non-voters and irregular non-voters. Persistent non-voters are those who not only did not vote in the 2011 provincial election, but also did not vote in the 2011 federal election, 2010 municipal election, or the 2007 provincial election. About 4 non-voters in 10 fall into this category. Irregular non-voters (accounting for about 6 non-voters in 10) did not vote in the 2011 provincial election but had voted in at least one of the three recent elections. As demonstrated by past behaviour, most non-voters are irregular voters. Indeed, almost 7 non-voters in 10 reported being very or somewhat likely to vote in the next provincial election, although only 4 in 10 admitted they would be very likely to do so.

About 1 in 5 of all eligible electors are permanent non-voters; that is, those who simply do not vote. This proportion has remained pretty much unchanged for the past three elections. However, even the term persistent non-voter is misleading; although this is the group that is the least likely to vote and see a value in voting, membership is not permanent and many younger non-voters indicate that they will vote in the future. However, they will be replaced (at least for a period of time) by new, young non-voters.

Voters tend to be consistent in their behaviour. Over 8 respondents in 10 who voted in the 2011 provincial election voted in all three recent elections as well. Almost all voters (95%) reported that they are very likely to vote in the next provincial election.

Although voters and non-voters are equally as likely to report that they live with other eligible voters, non-voters are more likely to come from households containing other eligible voters who also did not vote in the 2011 election. About 3 non-voters in 10 reported that all other eligible members of their household voted. This compares with some 9 in 10 voters.

### **Reasons for voting/not voting**

Voters independently provide two broad reasons for voting: the importance of the act of voting itself and the outcome of voting. The most common reasons for voting, as given by respondents, are philosophical. That is, they relate to the perceived importance of voting itself. Some respondents suggest that voting is a person's duty or responsibility (29%), while others say that it is a "right" or "privilege" that if not used, will mean the end of democracy (23%). Many others say that voting is a way of effecting change or getting a desired outcome. They vote to support or oppose a candidate or party (11%), to pick the government (9%), or as a way of bringing about change (7%). They want to have a voice or say in the election (11%), or they say that the act of voting gives them the "right" to complain about the government (10%).

The reasons provided by non-voters for not casting a ballot in 2011 fall into three broad categories: *distraction*, that is, reasons that suggest that they intended to vote but were either too busy or had to work (14%), were out of town (9%), were ill (6%), or simply forgot (4%); *disassociation*, that is, reasons that suggest that they did not intend to vote because they did not trust the candidates or did not like the choices (22%), did not care about the outcome (8%), said it did not matter who won (4%), or felt the outcome of the election was already determined (5%), so their vote would make no difference (2%); and *displacement*, that is, reasons that suggest that they wanted to vote but technical or administrative issues barred them, including that the voting locations were too far away (3%), they did not know where to vote (2%), or the voting locations closed too early (1%).

We tested eight reasons with non-voters, asking respondents to rate how important each is in their decision not to vote. For about 3 non-voters in 10, none of these reasons are very important in their decision. The most important reasons as rated by respondents are: did not know enough about the parties (29% said this was very important in their decision not to vote); felt their vote did not matter either in their electoral division (22%) or in the general election (20%) because it was clear who was going to win; and being too busy (21%).

Many non-voters need to be motivated to vote. While 8 in 10 of those who voted in the 2011 election decided to do so the day the election was called, only about 1 non-voter in 4 knew that same day they would not be voting. This suggests that the majority of non-voters intended to vote, but as the election progressed, they decided not to. Although many made the decision sometime after the election was called, over 1 non-voter in 4 decided not to vote only on the day of the election.

As noted above, many did not vote because they feel they were not knowledgeable enough to do so. Partly, this results from the fact that non-voters are less likely than voters to report following the 2011 provincial election closely. Indeed, almost half our non-voters report that they did not follow the election very closely. This compares with almost 9 voters in 10 who report the opposite (i.e., they followed the election at least somewhat closely). Although they did not follow the election closely, about 6 in 10 non-voters state that they were somewhat or very knowledgeable about the policies and platforms of the parties. This suggests that some non-voters feel that there is no need to follow an election to know the platforms of the parties. In other words, they may believe that nothing changes from one election to the next or that the

platforms of the competing parties are similar. Voters followed the election more closely, and over 9 in 10 felt that they were very or somewhat knowledgeable about the party platforms.

### **Motivators to vote or not vote**

Regardless of whether they voted in the 2011 provincial election, most respondents believe that it is important that people vote. While over 9 voters in 10 say it is very important or essential to vote, over 6 non-voters in 10 state the same thing. Only about 1 non-voter in 10 say it is not important that people vote.

The reasons non-voters give for why it is important for people to vote are similar to the reasons provided by voters as to why they cast a ballot in the 2011 election: voting affects outcomes and the act of voting is important. Whether voter or non-voter, about 1 in 5 respondents say that voting gives an individual a voice or a say in how things are done. Whether from a voter or a non-voter, other commonly mentioned reasons to vote include: it allows the majority's voice to be heard; it is the only way to change things; and to support or oppose a party or candidate. Voters are more likely than non-voters to cite philosophical reasons for the importance of voting. For example, voters (27%) are more likely than non-voters (17%) to say it is important that people vote because it is a right that must be exercised in order to protect democracy. When asked directly, it is not surprising that non-voters are less likely to agree that voting is every Manitoban's duty as a good citizen. Still, half of non-voters strongly agree with this statement (compared to over 8 in 10 respondents who voted).

Other factors play a role in the decision not to vote. Non-voters are more likely to agree that when people do not vote, it tells us that the system is not working. About half of non-voters strongly agree, compared with 4 voters in 10. Partly, this reflects the fact that 3 non-voters in 10 strongly agree that there was no political party in Manitoba that they really agree with, and almost 3 in 10 says that none of the political parties in the last provincial election had a plan to address the issues that are important to them. (Voters are about half as likely to agree strongly.) About 3 in 10 of both non-voters and voters agree strongly that they are more likely to vote if the election race is close. However, the 2011 provincial election was supposedly too close to call but did not encourage these non-voters to vote.

Most respondents feel that voting is something that needs to be encouraged, although voters are more likely than non-voters to strongly agree. Among voters, parents are considered to be central to this, with 9 voters in 10 agreeing strongly that parents should instil in their children the importance of voting. A majority of non-voters — about 6 in 10 — also strongly agree. A majority also believes schools should be doing more to educate children on the benefits of voting and political participation. Again, voters (almost 7 in 10) are more likely than non-voters (over half) to strongly agree.

Similarly, the vast majority of respondents, whether voters or non-voters, would support Elections Manitoba's encouraging Manitobans to vote by telling them why their vote matters, why it is important, and what the consequences are if people do not vote. About 8 non-voters in 10 would at least somewhat support such an initiative, including almost half who would strongly support it. This compares with over 9 voters in 10, including almost 7 in 10 who would strongly support it.

As noted above, most non-voters recognize that voting is important. When asked what might have encouraged them to vote in the 2011 provincial election, respondents commonly do not suggest a simple fix. It would involve changing the way non-voters view candidates and parties; in other words, they would have to overcome those issues that cause them to be disassociated from the process in the first place. About 1 in 5 respondents say that they would have been encouraged to vote if they had had greater trust or confidence in the candidates, if the issues were important to them (8%), or if they felt the outcome was not predetermined (9%). About 1 in 3 non-voters state that there is nothing that would have encouraged them to vote, or they could think of nothing that would. Others suggest that they would have been encouraged to vote if they had had more information on the candidates and issues (8%), if the election had been held on a more convenient day (7%), if the voting location had been more easily accessible (5%), or if they had had more information on where and when to vote (3%).

Most respondents, regardless of their recent voting behaviour, are at least somewhat satisfied with the current electoral system. However, only 1 in 5 non-voters are very satisfied. Indeed, over 1 in 4 non-voters are dissatisfied with the current system, including about 1 in 8 non-voters who stated that the system discourages them from voting. About half the non-voters report that a proportional representation electoral system would make them more likely to vote, although only 1 in 7 would be much more likely. While proportional representation may appear to promise more voters, in fact 1 in 5 non-voters say that they would be less likely to vote under such a system.

A majority of voters (73%) and non-voters (55%) have concerns about online voting, most often about the integrity of the vote. That being said, almost 6 non-voters in 10 (58%) say that they would be more likely or much more likely to vote in the next provincial election if they could do so online on the Elections Manitoba website. According to these non-voters, making it more convenient to cast their ballot would encourage them to vote. However, 1 in 6 non-voters state they would be less likely to vote if voting online was an option.

## **Conclusion**

This research reinforces what we found in 2003 and 2007: most Manitoba non-voters think that it is less important that they personally vote, though they think that it is very important for people in general to do so.

Compared with the previous provincial elections, there was a dramatic drop in the voter turnout in 2003 and the turnout has not increased significantly in the following two elections. In past research, we postulated that the turnout should rebound, depending on the circumstances. There was a slight rebound in turnout (54% to 57%) in 2007, but results were stagnant in 2011 (56%). This is in spite of the fact that the 2011 election met one condition that some non-voters say would encourage them to vote: an election where the outcome was difficult to predict. Throughout the election period, media commentary suggested the race was very competitive which, according to this research, should have resulted in a higher turnout. It did not, which possibly speaks to the fact that as eligible voters become disengaged from the electoral process, even close-fought races will not necessarily galvanize the electorate, since many are not following media related to the election and therefore would not know that the race is close.

There are several concerns about the composition of the non-voter group in general. As mentioned above, a large proportion of the non-voters group is made up of young adults. Other

research suggests it is quite normal for young adults to be disproportionately represented in the non-voters segment. Indeed, voting is often seen as having a life-cycle. As people age, they take on greater responsibilities and are affected more directly by government policies; they become more engaged in the political process and are more likely to vote. However, it has also been suggested that lack of engagement in the electoral process at an early age can lead to a lifetime of not voting. Non-voting in one election reinforces the decision not to vote in the next. The worry is that the growing number of young adults not voting will result in more of these young adults remaining non-voters throughout their life.

As this research shows, the vast majority of Manitobans are predisposed to vote, but for many it is not a priority. Most believe (regardless of whether they voted or not in 2011) that it is very important, or even essential, that people vote. Most also agree that it is the duty of good citizens to vote. And, if asked, most non-voting respondents would likely say that they are good citizens. Although they did not get around to voting, many probably believe their non-voting was an anomaly. In other words, they consider their intention to vote almost as good as the act of voting itself. Likely, from their perspective the outcomes of elections help reinforce their decisions, as the results would not have changed if they had voted.

Future research with non-voters faces a number of challenges. Over the course of three provincial elections and three surveys examining voters and non-voters, the willingness of non-voters to admit their behaviour and to participate in surveys has been declining. In particular, the youngest age cohort (18 to 29) is difficult to get to participate. This is due to several factors, including that this age group, being more uninterested in the electoral process, is less likely than older age cohorts to be willing to participate in research about that process. This, coupled with the fact that the youngest cohort are not as readily available through traditional methods of contacting the public (i.e., landline telephone), means that in future research, alternate methodology will need to be considered in order to involve young non-voters in a fulsome way. This might include supplementing a telephone sample with an on-line survey, but whatever the methodological approach, it will be an important consideration the next time this research is conducted.

In spite of the challenges faced in encouraging participation of non-voters in surveys, the results of this survey appear to be representative of the population of non-voters. Indeed, the findings from this study are very similar to those following the 2007 and 2003 provincial elections, and comparisons over time suggest little has changed.

## 1.0 Introduction

Elections Manitoba engaged PRA Inc. to conduct a study of voter turnout in the October 2011 provincial election. PRA conducted a random sample survey of two groups of Manitobans: those who voted and those who did not vote.

The purpose of this research is to understand the reasons people chose to vote or not to vote, any barriers that might have prevented Manitobans from voting, and changes that might encourage non-voters to participate.

### 1.1 Voter turnout across time

Since the late 1950s, voter turnout for provincial elections in Manitoba has been above 60%, that is, until the most recent provincial elections. At 56%, the turnout for the 2011 provincial election was similar to the previous two elections, but down significantly from the 1999 provincial election (68%). Indeed, the turnouts in the last three provincial elections are reminiscent of those in the 1940s. See Figure 1.

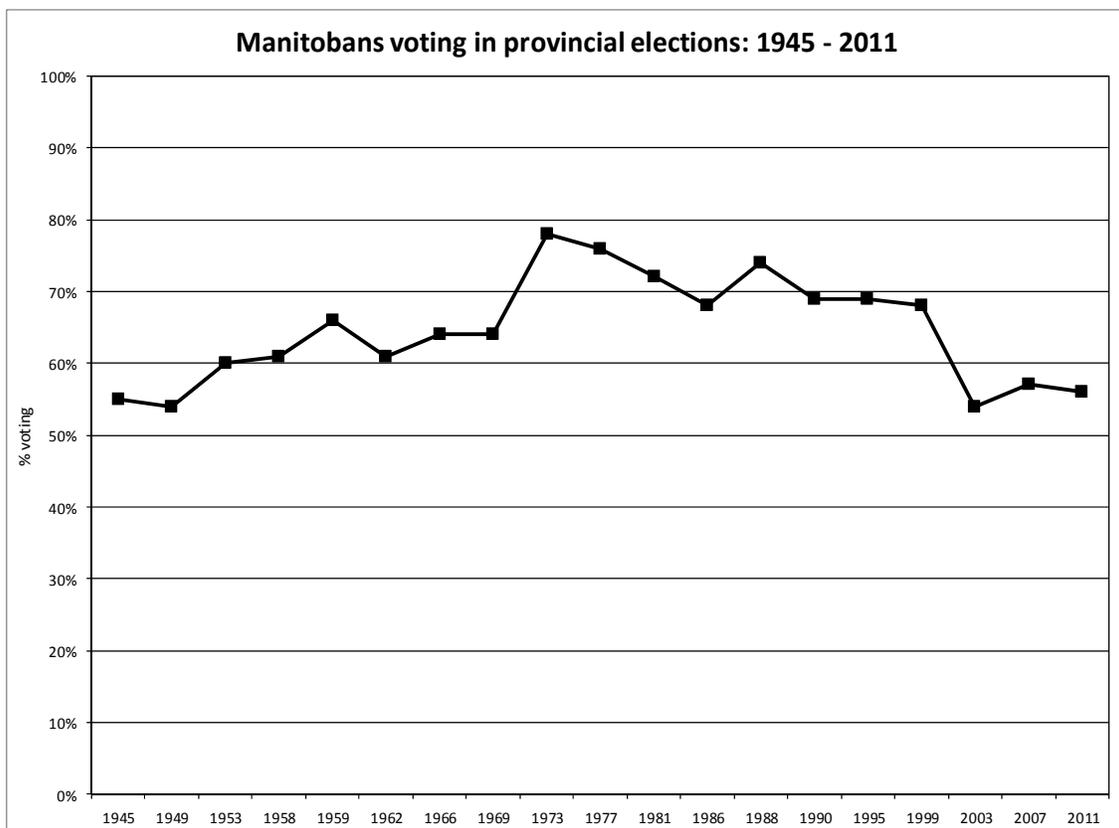


Figure 1

## **1.2 Methodology**

Similar surveys were conducted by PRA for Elections Manitoba in 2003 and 2007. The questionnaires used previously were the basis for the questionnaire used following the 2011 election. The final version of the 2011 questionnaire can be found in Appendix A.

Respondents were selected by random digit dialling (which allows us to include those with unlisted or new numbers). This technique produces a random sample that includes the highest possible percentage of eligible respondents. This study was to include an equal number of voters (that is, individuals who self-identified as having voted in the 2011 provincial election) and non-voters (that is, those who did not vote in that election). Non-voters were much more difficult to find because people hesitate to admit that they did not vote and because non-voters were generally less interested in participating in any survey on voting.

It has always been the case that telephone surveys face some challenges in representing all subgroups of the population. Traditionally, households with low incomes are under-represented since they are often the same households that are the most mobile and do not have telephones. As well, households where English is not the first language can be under-represented. That being said, normally, through random digit dialling, most subpopulations are fairly well represented. For example, if half the population is male and the other half female, typically the sample is distributed similarly.

There is a growing challenge in representing non-voters in surveys. It has been increasingly difficult to include non-voters in each of the three post-election surveys. While eligible individuals who did not vote in the 2011 election should be relatively common since they make up more than 40% of the population of electors, they are, as mentioned, not easily found. In 2011, through random calling, we completed 403 interviews with voters, but only 67 with non-voters. For every respondent who would admit he or she was a non-voter and was willing to complete a survey, about six said they voted. In other words, we completed one survey with a non-voter for every six we completed with voters. Achieving the required number of surveys with non-voters took extensive screening, meaning that after completing 400 surveys with voters, we asked all contacted if anyone in their household was eligible, but did not vote. As can be seen in Appendix C, many individuals were disqualified as they claimed that everyone in their household voted.

We raise this issue for future consideration. As presented below, the non-voters who participated in this 2011 study appear to be representative of non-voters in general; their attitudes and opinions appear to be very similar to non-voters in previous studies when it was much easier to get non-voters to participate in the survey.

This study involved a random sample telephone survey of about 800 adult Manitobans who were eligible to vote in the October 2011 provincial election. The survey was pretested before being administered to the sample. Interviewing was conducted in January and February 2012. Although this survey was conducted in 2012, throughout the remainder of this document we refer to it as the 2011 survey, reflecting the fact that the study is about the 2011 provincial election.

Table 1 provides more details about the methodology.

<b>Table 1: Summary of methodology</b>	
<b>Methodology</b>	<b>Key information</b>
Pretest dates	January 5, 2012
Survey dates	January 9 to February 12, 2012
Sample size: voters	n=403
Sample size: non-voters	n=400
Interviewing method	Telephone
Sample selection	Random digit dialling/Screening for non-voters
Approximate error rate (theoretical) for each sample	$\pm 5.0\%$ , 19 times out of 20

### **1.3 Weighting of data**

Normally, we would weight the data to more closely conform to the known demographics of the population. In this case, however, we do not know the characteristics of voters or non-voters and therefore could not weight the data. That said, the data from the two subgroups are used primarily for comparison purposes to understand the difference between these two subpopulations.

### **1.4 Previous research**

As mentioned, a similar survey was conducted following the 2003 and 2007 general elections. For the most part, the findings in the three surveys are similar. Throughout this report we make comparisons of interest. A complete comparison can be found in Appendix B.

## 2.0 Characteristics of voters/non-voters

In this section, we review the characteristics of voters and non-voters. Neither voters nor non-voters are uniform groups.

### 2.1 Demographic characteristics

Table 2 (next page) presents a demographic profile of voters and non-voters. These two groups share many similarities. For example, there is no statistical difference among voters and non-voters in terms of gender, household income, education, household size, or place of birth.

However, there are some differences in the two populations. Non-voters tend to be younger and, because they are young, are more likely to have children under 18 in their households.

- ▶ **Non-voters tend to be younger than voters.** In our sample, 13% of non-voters are 18 to 29 years of age, compared to just 4% of voters. Indeed, over 3 in 4 of the 18 to 29-year-olds we interviewed for this study are non-voters. Thus, it is not surprising that voters tend to be older than non-voters. In our sample, almost 6 in 10 of voters are 55 years of age or older (57%). This compares with less than 1 in 3 non-voters who are 55 or older (32%). Indeed, 2 respondents in 3 who are 55 or older are voters. The average age of our voting sample is 57 years of age; ten years older than our non-voting sample. In both cases, we likely under represent the youngest age cohort.
- ▶ **Non-voters are more likely to report having children under 18 years of age in their household.** Some 37% of non-voters reported having children under 18 in their household, compared with 25% of voters.

<b>Table 2: Demographic characteristics of voters and non-voters</b>		
	<b>Non-voters</b>	<b>Voters</b>
<b>Age*</b>		
18 to 29	13%	4%
30 to 54	55%	39%
55 and over	32%	57%
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	57%	54%
Male	43%	46%
<b>Household income</b>		
Under \$35,000	21%	19%
\$35,000 to \$50,000	20%	14%
\$50,000 to \$75,000	22%	28%
Over \$75,000	37%	40%
<b>Education</b>		
Less than high school	19%	12%
High school grad	27%	24%
Some post-secondary	12%	16%
College/University grad	41%	49%
<b>Number of adult members of household size</b>		
One member	23%	25%
Two members	57%	55%
Three or more	20%	20%
<b>Children under 18 in household*</b>		
Yes	37%	25%
No	63%	75%
<b>Live in Manitoba</b>		
All their life	61%	60%
Most of their life	11%	16%
Some of their life	28%	24%
<b>Place of birth</b>		
In Canada	89%	90%
Outside Canada	11%	10%
Note: Percentages exclude those who did not know or did not give a response.		
* Statistically significant difference between groups (chi-square probability < .001).		

## **2.2 Voting behaviour in other elections**

We asked both voters and non-voters about their past voting behaviours and future voting intentions.

### **2.2.1 Voting in past elections**

We asked respondents about their past voting behaviours, specifically whether or not they voted in three recent elections prior to the 2011 provincial election:

- ▶ the last federal election in May 2011
- ▶ the last municipal election in October 2010
- ▶ the previous provincial election in May 2007

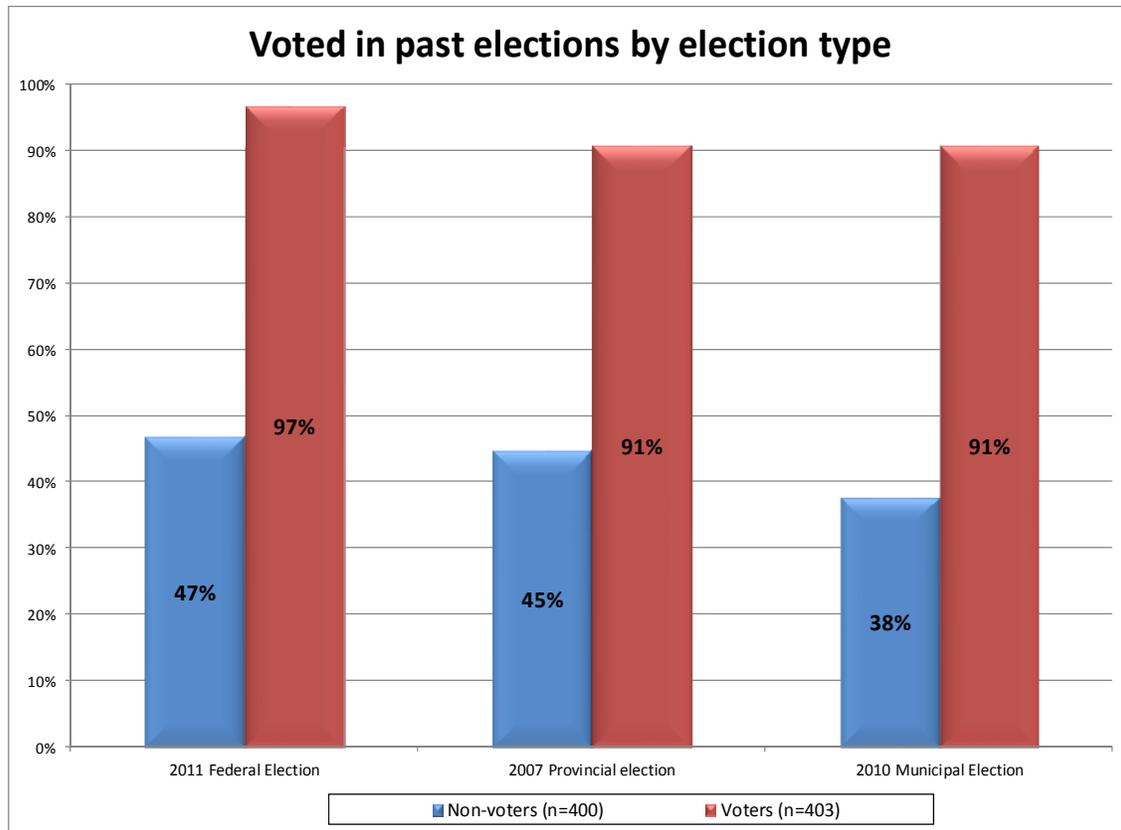
Respondents who voted in the 2011 provincial election are consistent in their voting with almost all reporting having voted in each of these previous elections.<sup>1</sup> Conversely, those who did not vote in the latest provincial election are less likely to vote, but many are not consistent non-voters. Further, voters and non-voters alike tend to exaggerate their voting behavior suggesting that there is a strong need to appear to behave in a socially desirable manner.

As shown in Figure 2, of those eligible to vote in these past elections:

- ▶ Over 9 voters in 10 report voting in each of these three elections; in the case of the last federal election, almost all report having voted.
- ▶ Current non-voters are less consistent in their past behaviour. Almost half of our non-voters report voting in the 2011 federal election, and almost half report the same for the 2007 provincial elections. About 4 non-voters in 10 report voting in the last municipal election.

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<sup>1</sup> This pattern is similar to the finding in 2007 and 2003, when considering the three elections previous to the provincial election in these years.



**Figure 2**

Figure 3 shows that those who claim to have voted most recently are consistent in behaviour, claiming to vote in all previous elections.<sup>2</sup> Those who report voting in the 2011 provincial election appear to be predisposed to vote in any election. Over 8 voters in 10 also voted in all three previous elections. However, even among these voters, a few missed voting in at least one of these elections.

- ▶ As previously stated, non-voters tend to be less consistent than their voting counterparts. Among non-voters, about 1 in 4 report having voted in all three previous elections, suggesting that particular circumstances may have prevented their participation in the 2011 provincial election.
- ▶ Almost 4 in 10 had voted in one or two of the past three elections, suggesting that particular circumstances or the type of election may encourage or discourage them from voting.
- ▶ Approximately the same percentage (38%) reports voting in none of the last three elections, suggesting that they are not engaged by the process at all.

<sup>2</sup> Differences between voters and non-voters is statistically significant (chi-square probability < .001).

These results are similar to those in 2007 and 2003 and suggest that non-voters are not a uniform block and that membership in the non-voter group fluctuates from election to election. Indeed, among those who did not vote in the 2011 provincial election, about 6 in 10 might be considered irregular voters, that is, individuals who vote irregularly, likely due to personal reasons or the circumstances of the election. Almost 4 in 10 might be considered persistent non-voters. These individuals have not voted in any of the last four elections.

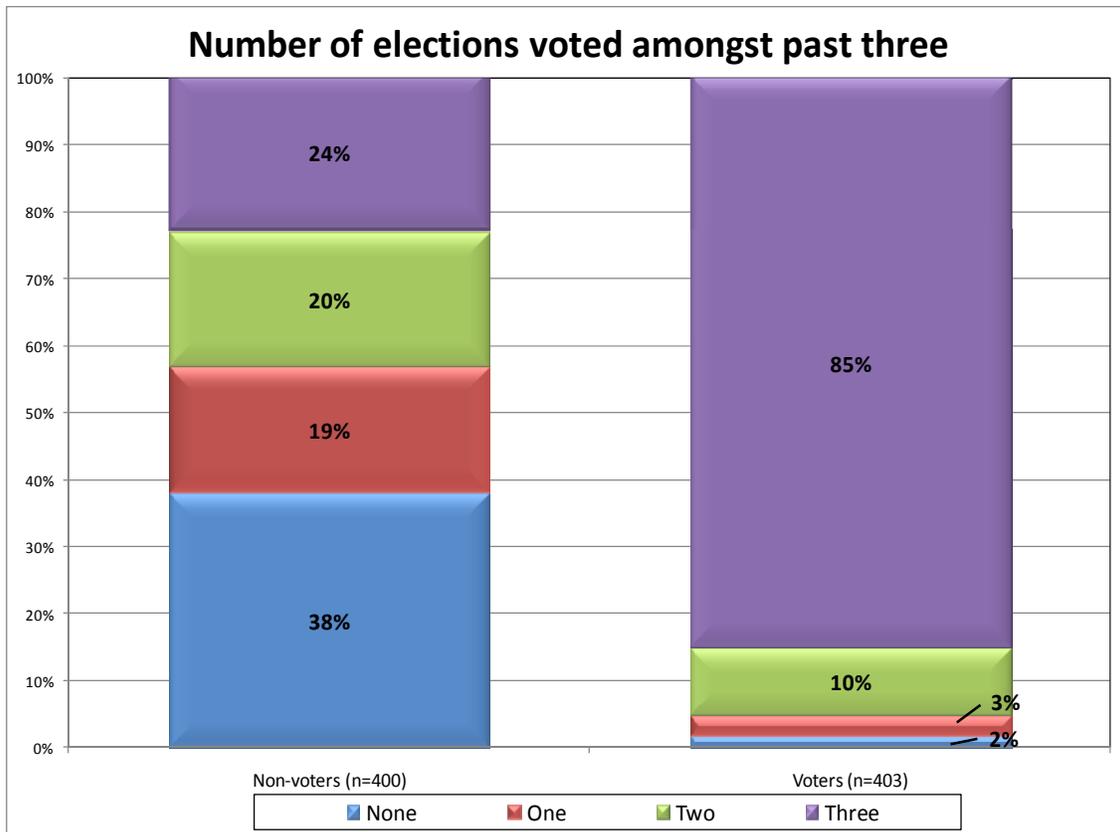


Figure 3

## 2.2.2 Voting in future elections

Non-voters are not only less likely to have voted in past elections, they are also less likely to see themselves voting in the future. But again, non-voters are not uniform in their behaviour.

As shown in Figure 4, those who did not vote in the 2011 provincial election are split evenly among three types:

- ▶ **Future voters.** About 4 in 10 report that they are very likely to vote in the next provincial election (that is, they intend to do so).
- ▶ **Possible voters.** Almost 3 in 10 (29%) are somewhat likely to vote (that is, they will vote depending on a number of factors and circumstances).
- ▶ **Future non-voters.** Almost as many — over 1 in 4 (26%) — are either very or somewhat unlikely to vote, that is, they have no real desire or motivation to vote.

Current voters are persistent. Almost all (95%) voters say that they are very likely to vote in the next provincial election.<sup>3</sup>

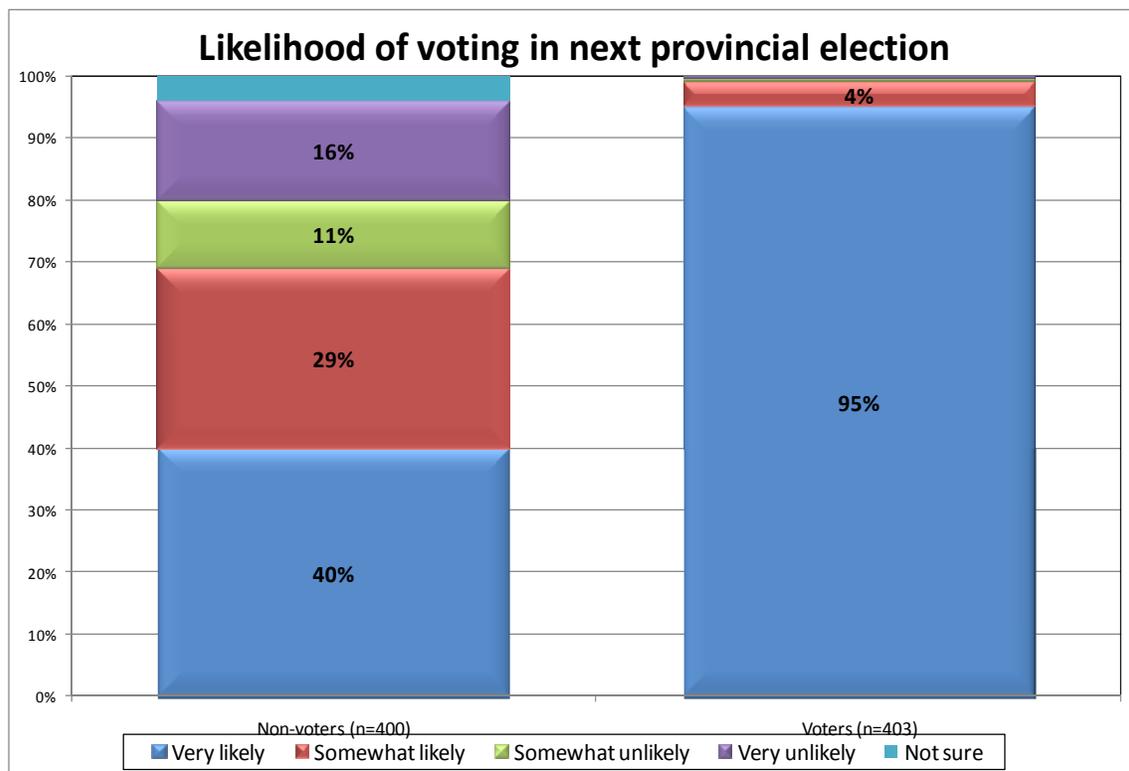


Figure 4

<sup>3</sup> The question read: Q60. *How likely are you to vote in the next provincial general election? Would you say you are very likely, somewhat likely, somewhat unlikely, or very unlikely?* Results between voters and non-voters are statistically significant (chi-square probability < .001).

### 2.3 Other household members' voting behaviour

The voting behaviour of other household members appears to reflect that of the individuals surveyed. Voters tend to come from voting households. Non-voters tend to come from non-voting households. Not voting is not only an individual behaviour; it may also be a family practice.<sup>4</sup> In fact, for both voters (74%) and non-voters (74%), 3 in 4 report that there was at least one other person eligible to vote in the 2011 provincial election living in their household. The difference is in the behaviour of these household members. As shown in Figure 5:

- ▶ Among non-voters who report another eligible voter in their household, about 3 in 10 report that all other eligible members of their household voted.
- ▶ Among voters who report other eligible voters in their household, 9 in 10 report that all of them voted in the 2011 provincial election.

These findings are very similar to those in 2007.

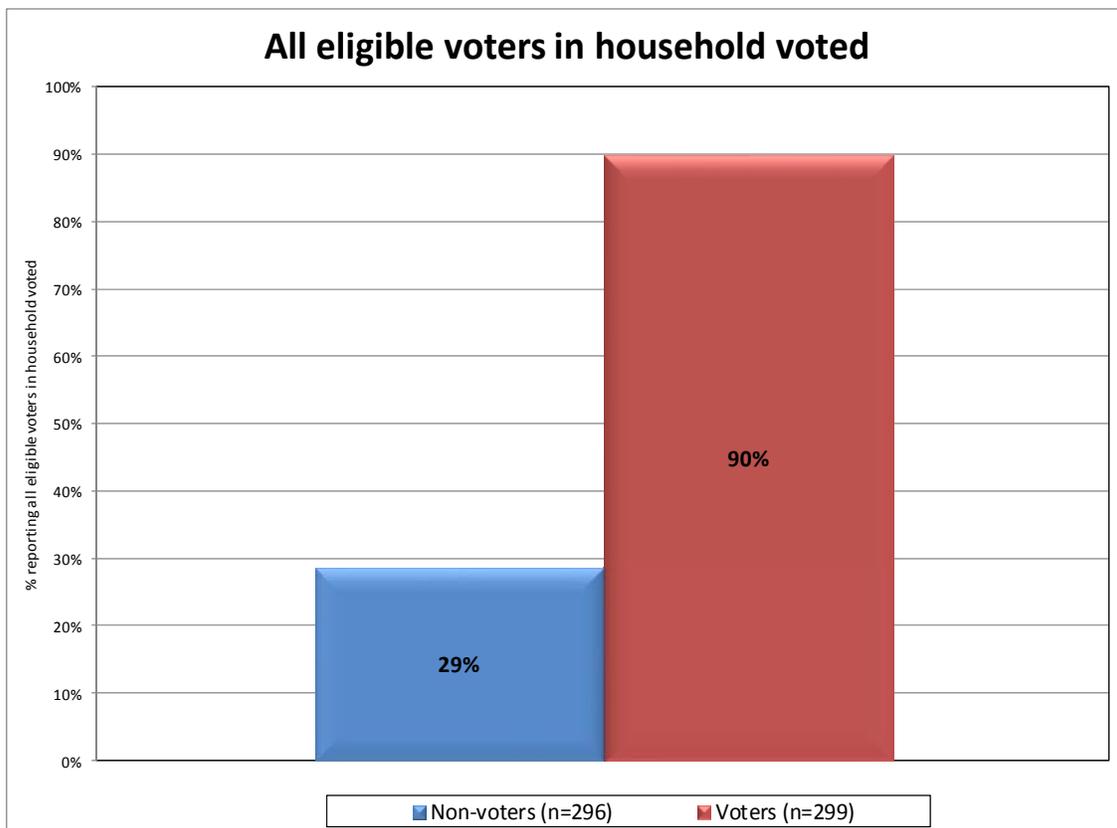


Figure 5

<sup>4</sup> The questions read: Q5. Are there other people in your household who were eligible to vote in the October 2011 provincial election? Q6. As far as you know, did all those eligible in your household vote in the October 2011 election? Results between voters and non-voters are statistically significant (chi-square probability < .001).

### 3.0 Reasons for voting/not voting

In this section, we examine the decision to vote or not to vote. We find that people have many different reasons for not voting, the most common being that they often do not know who to vote for, do not consider their vote important, or consider other activities to be more important.

#### 3.1 Reasons for voting

We asked individuals who reported that they voted in the October 2011 provincial election why they voted. These unaided responses were categorized as shown in Table 3, but can be grouped into two broad themes:

- ▶ **The importance of the act of voting itself.** The most common reasons for voting, as given by respondents, are philosophical. That is, they relate to the perceived importance of voting itself. Respondents suggest that voting is a person’s duty or responsibility (29%), while others say that it is a “right” or “privilege” that, if not used, will mean the end of democracy (23%). Still others state explicitly that “voting is important” (10%).
- ▶ **The outcome of voting.** Others say that voting is a way of effecting change or getting a desired outcome. Some suggest that they vote to support a candidate or party (11%), to pick the government (9%), or to bring about change (7%). Others simply want to have a voice or say in the election (11%). Many also mention that the act of voting gives them the “right” to complain about the government, a right they feel does not extend to non-voters (10%).

These findings are very similar to the reasons provided by voters after the 2007 and 2003 elections.

Reason	2011 (n=403)	2007 (n=400)	2003 (n=410)
<b>Importance of the act of voting</b>			
Duty/You have to vote/Responsibility	29%	24%	23%
Exercise right/privilege/To protect democracy	23%	20%	24%
Voting is important/I wanted to vote/People should vote	10%	7%	7%
<b>Outcome of the process</b>			
To support/oppose a candidate/party	11%	15%	19%
To have a voice/A say in how things are done	11%	13%	14%
No right to complain if we don't vote	10%	11%	14%
Picking government/Government decisions affect everyone	9%	6%	1%
Only way to change things/Only way to make a difference	7%	5%	9%
To let the majority's voice be heard/To find out what Manitobans want	1%	1%	1%
<b>Other reasons</b>			
Always vote	14%	15%	11%
System doesn't work if people don't vote	-	-	1%
Other reasons	4%	1%	2%
Don't know/No particular reason	1%	1%	2%

Note: Respondents could provide more than one answer. Therefore, columns may not sum to 100%.

## 3.2 Explanations for not voting

We explored with non-voters the reasons why they did not vote, first by asking them to tell us the reason for this decision and then by testing the importance of several reasons in their decision not to vote.

### 3.2.1 Reasons for not voting

The literature suggests that there are three general groups within the non-voter population:

- ▶ *distracted* voters, who wanted to vote but had to attend to other commitments
- ▶ *disassociated* voters, who did not want to vote for whatever reason
- ▶ *displaced* voters, who were unable to vote due to administrative problems or technicalities

As shown in Table 4, we have grouped the reasons provided by respondents into these three general categories:

- ▶ **Distracted.** Many non-voters identify reasons that may be considered distractions in the sense that they took their attention away from voting. Most commonly, non-voters told us that they did not have time to vote because they were either too busy, had to work (14%), out of town (9%), or simply forgot (4%). Others were out of town (9%), ill (6%), or report other things (1%) that kept them from voting on Election Day.
- ▶ **Disassociated.** Many other respondents provide reasons that suggest that they did not want to bother voting. Some say they did not trust the candidates, did not like any of the choices, or generally were disillusioned with politics (22%). Others say they did not care about the outcome (8%) and did not know who to vote for (6%). Similarly, some think it did not matter who won the election (4%) because there is no real difference among the political parties. Some (5%) say that they did not vote because they felt the outcome of the election was already determined; in other words, their vote would make no difference (2%).
- ▶ **Displaced.** Only a few respondents mention reasons that might be considered administrative or technical. Some say they did not vote because they were not on the voters list or did not have identification (4%), the voting locations were too far away (3% - which may be more an issue of time than of location), the voting locations closed too early (1%), or they did not know where to vote (2%).

Some other reasons include that they felt they did not know enough about the parties or issues (11%).

<b>Table 4: Reasons for NOT voting in last provincial election</b>			
<i>Q3. As mentioned, people have different reasons for not voting. Why didn't you vote in the October 2011 provincial election?</i>			
<b>Reasons</b>	<b>2011 % (n=400)</b>	<b>2007 % (n=400)</b>	<b>2003 % (n=402)</b>
<b>Distractions</b>			
Didn't have time/Busy/Bad time of year/Had to work	14%	17%	24%
Not at home/Away from home/Out of town	9%	9%	8%
Ill/Sick	6%	5%	3%
Forgot	4%	5%	7%
Other distractions (e.g., family/poor weather)	1%	-	-
<b>Disassociated</b>			
Lack of trust in candidates/Didn't like any of the choices/Disillusioned	22%	14%	13%
Not interested/Couldn't be bothered/Indifferent	8%	9%	12%
Didn't know who to vote for	6%	6%	5%
Outcome of election already determined	5%	4%	5%
Doesn't matter who wins/No difference among parties	4%	8%	8%
Dissatisfaction with government/Lack of leadership	2%	1%	1%
My vote doesn't matter/doesn't make a difference	2%	1%	-
Too lazy to bother	1%	1%	1%
Issues are irrelevant/not a major concern	1%	1%	<1%
<b>Displaced</b>			
Wasn't on voters list/Not enumerated/can't vote/Didn't have ID	4%	2%	1%
Voting location too far away/Far from work/No ride	3%	4%	5%
Didn't know where or when to vote	2%	2%	2%
Voting location closed too early/Wasn't time to vote	1%	1%	3%
Inconvenient due to age/disability	1%	-	-
<b>Other</b>			
Not well informed/No info on parties	11%	7%	10%
Have never voted/don't believe in voting	3%	-	-
Religious objections	2%	3%	3%
Other	7%	4%	2%
Don't know/no particular reason	2%	4%	4%
Note: Respondents could provide more than one answer. Therefore, columns may not sum to 100%.			

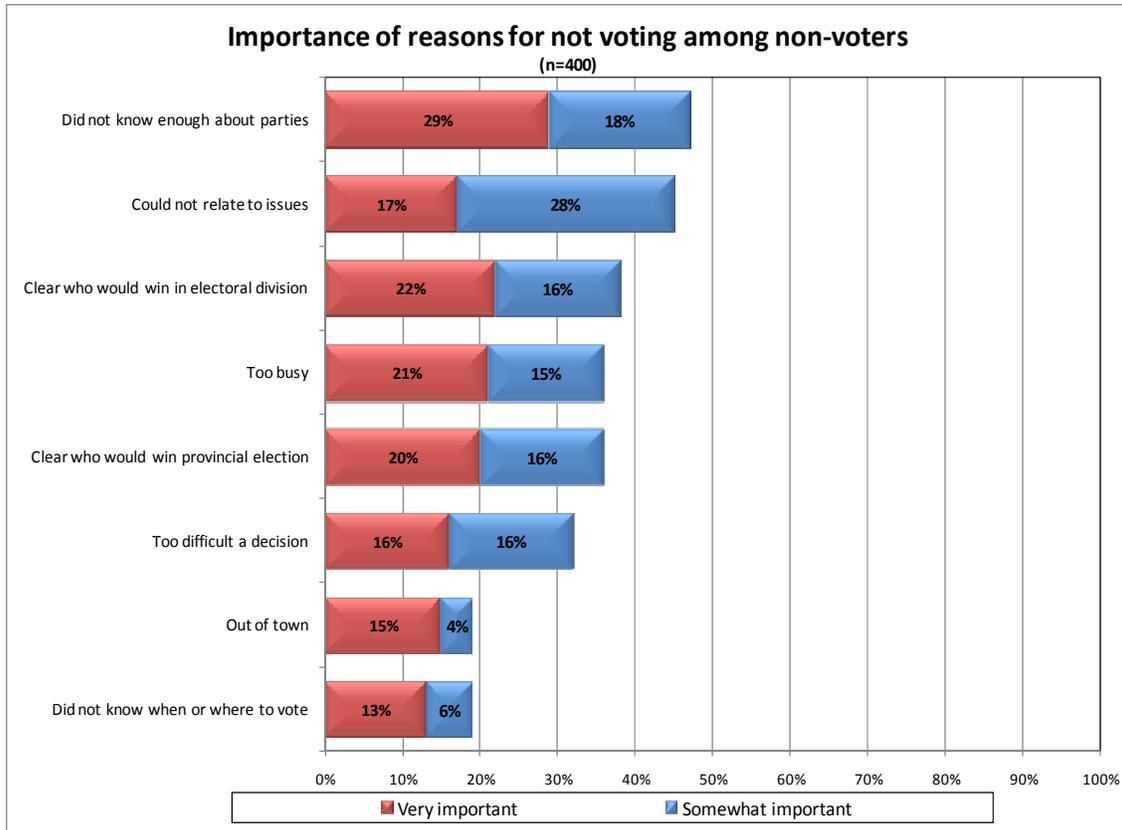
### **3.2.2 Factors in decision not to vote in 2011**

We asked non-voters to rate the importance of eight potential reasons why they might not have voted. The importance of these reasons varies, but no single reason is very important to a majority of non-voters, suggesting that there are many influences in the decision not to vote. Indeed, 3 respondents in 10 (30%) found none of these eight reasons to be very important in their decision not to vote, which suggests that there are other reasons that we did not test.

The important reasons according to respondents are:

- ▶ *Did not know enough about the parties, policies, or candidates to vote.* Almost half of non-voters (46%) say that not knowing enough about the parties was at least somewhat important, including 29% who say it was very important in their decision not to vote.
- ▶ *Could not relate to any of the election issues.* Just under half (44%) say that being unable to relate to the issues was at least somewhat important in their decision not to vote, including 17% who say it was very important.
- ▶ *My vote did not matter in my electoral division (riding) since it was clear who would win.* Almost 4 in 10 also say that the fact that the outcome in their riding was clear was important, including 22% who say it was very important in their decision.
- ▶ *Too busy.* Over 1 in 3 say that being too busy was at least somewhat important in their decision not to vote, including 21% who say it was very important.
- ▶ *My vote did not matter since it was clear which party was going to win the provincial election.* Over 1 in 3 say the fact that it was clear which party was going to win the election was at least somewhat important in their decision not to vote, including 20% who say it was very important. This is especially interesting since the 2011 election was very close and to most observers, it was not clear which of the two main parties would win.
- ▶ *It was too difficult to make a choice among the parties or candidates running in the election.* About 1 in 3 say that it was too difficult to make the decision who to vote for, including 16% who say it was very important in their decision.
- ▶ *Out of town.* About 1 in 5 say that being out of town was at least somewhat important, including 15% who say it was very important.
- ▶ *Didn't know where or when to vote.* Similarly, about 1 in 5 say that not knowing where or when to vote was important in their decision not to vote, including 13% who say it was very important.

Figure 6 shows the proportion of non-voters who rated these reasons as somewhat or very important.<sup>5</sup>



**Figure 6**

### 3.3 Reasons for decline in voter turnout

We explained to respondents that voter turnout has been declining in recent Manitoba elections. We asked respondents – both non-voters and voters – why they think this is the case. Most of the reasons are similar to what respondents have mentioned previously. Most respondents tend to believe that voters are disassociated from the voting process.

- ▶ Whether voters or non-voters, most attribute the decline in voter turnout to a general disenchantment with the political system. They say that people feel that it does not matter which party wins an election; there is no real difference among parties; people are not interested or do not care about the outcome; or that they are disillusioned with politicians or parties.
- ▶ A few think that distractions, such as people being too busy, lazy or uninformed, account for the decline.

<sup>5</sup> The question read: *I'm going to read a list of reasons people sometimes give for not voting. As I read each, please tell me whether the reason was very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not at all important in your decision not to vote in the October 2011 provincial election.*

- ▶ Very few blame the decline as a result of displaced voters (i.e., they do not think it has occurred because it is difficult to vote). A few say people are not voting because the voting locations are too far away; they do not know when or where to vote; or they do not understand the process.

See Table 5. The results are similar to those in 2003.<sup>6</sup>

<b>Table 5: Impressions of why voter turnout is declining</b>		
<i>Q7. Voter turnout has been declining in recent Manitoba elections. In your opinion, why are fewer people voting?</i>		
	<b>Non-voters (n=400)</b>	<b>Voters (n=403)</b>
<b>Disassociated</b>		
Disillusioned with the process/politicians/elections	24%	13%
Doesn't matter who wins/No difference between parties/Doesn't matter if they vote	23%	24%
Not interested/Don't care/Couldn't be bothered	12%	26%
Lack trust of candidate/Didn't like any of the choices	11%	8%
Issues are irrelevant/not major concerns, negative advertising	5%	5%
Youth disassociated with voting	4%	7%
Dissatisfaction with government/Lack of leadership	4%	4%
Outcome of election already determined/Vote doesn't matter	3%	3%
People don't know who to vote for	2%	1%
<b>Distracted</b>		
Don't have time/Too busy	5%	5%
Not well informed/No information on parties	5%	7%
People are lazy	3%	5%
People take democracy for granted	2%	9%
Don't know who to vote for/Don't know candidates	2%	1%
People ill	<1%	<1%
<b>Displaced</b>		
Process old fashion (should be online)	1%	<1%
Voting location too far away	<1%	1%
Didn't know where/when to vote	<1%	<1%
Inconvenient due to age/disability	<1%	1%
Not on voters list/Not enumerated	<1%	1%
<b>Other</b>		
Other	4%	5%
Don't know/no particular reason	19%	12%

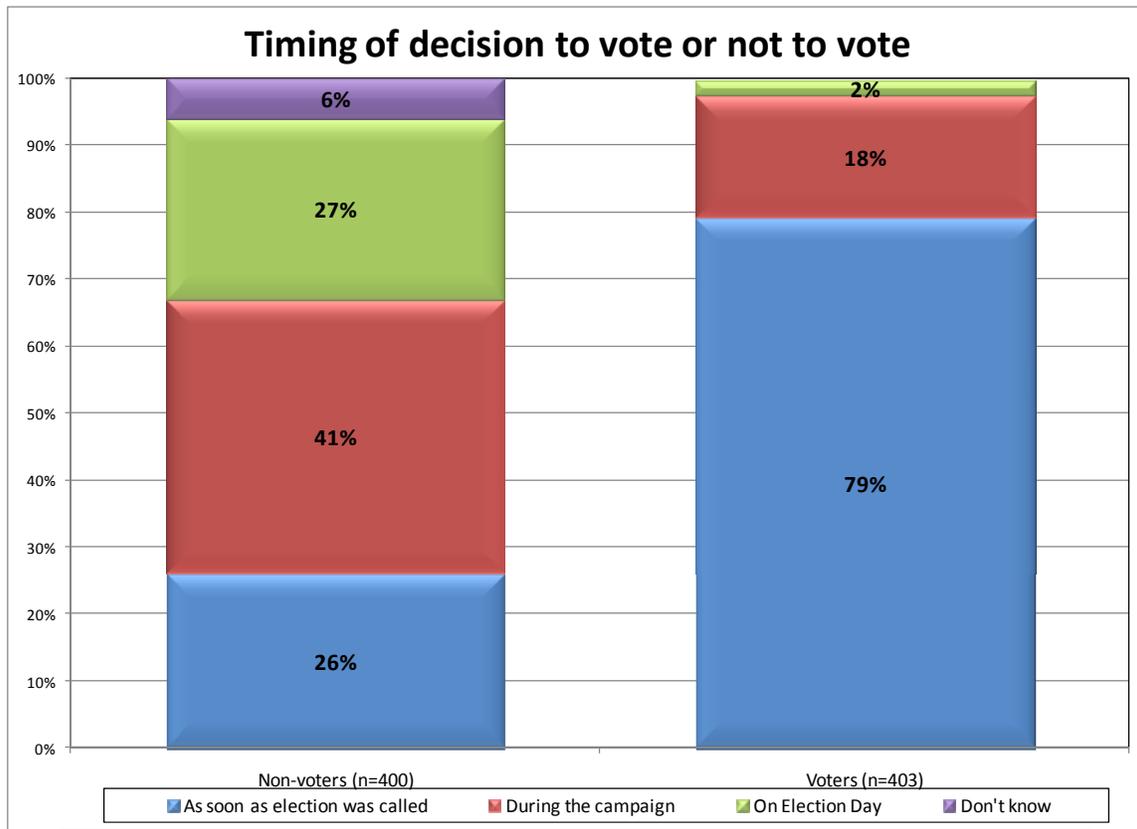
Note: Respondents could provide more than one answer. Therefore, columns may not sum to 100%.

<sup>6</sup> Although the results in 2003 and 2007 are similar, there are some differences. Far more respondents in 2003, both voters (15%) and non-voters (13%), say that they thought they decline in voter turnout was a result of the fact that the outcome of the 2003 election was predetermined, so voting did not matter.

### 3.4 Timing of decision to vote/not vote

We asked voters and non-voters when they made the decision to vote or not to vote in the 2011 provincial election. Most voters had every intention to vote from the outset of an election, while non-voters made their decision during the election period.<sup>7</sup> See Figure 7.

- ▶ More than 1 in 4 non-voters knew they would not vote as soon as the election was called, suggesting that they never had any intention of voting. Conversely, 8 voters in 10 knew they would vote as soon as the election was called.
- ▶ Over 4 non-voters in 10 decided not to vote sometime between the election call and Election Day, suggesting that they were waiting for something to help them make up their minds, engage them, or simply encourage them to vote. This compares with 1 in 5 voters who made the decision to vote during this period.
- ▶ Over 1 in 4 non-voters made the decision not to vote on Election Day, suggesting that the circumstance of the day prevented them from voting. Only a few voters (2%) made the decision to vote on Election Day.



**Figure 7**

<sup>7</sup> The question read: *Q17. Thinking back to the October provincial election, which of the following best describes when you decided that you would or would not vote?* Differences between voters and non-voters are statistically significant (chi-square probability < .001).

### 3.5 Knowledge of 2011 election

Perhaps not surprisingly, voters are more likely than non-voters to report following the 2011 provincial election closely and being knowledgeable about the policies and platforms of the various political parties.

- ▶ While almost 9 voters in 10 report following the election at least somewhat closely (including 27% who say they followed it very closely), a little more than half of non-voters did the same (including about 15% who say they followed it very closely).
- ▶ Over 9 voters in 10 say that they were at least somewhat knowledgeable about the policies and platforms of the various political parties that participated in the provincial election, including 26% who say they were very knowledgeable. Among non-voters, more than 6 in 10 report being somewhat knowledgeable, including 14% who claim to be very knowledgeable.

Interestingly, among both voters and non-voters, more report being knowledgeable than following the election, suggesting that some do not expect past policies and platforms to be very different from one election to another.

While lack of interest in the election and knowledge of party platforms are barriers for some, many non-voters appear to be engaged in the election process, which suggests that other issues kept them from voting. See Table 6.

<b>Table 6: Knowledge of 2011 election</b>		
<i>Q18. Thinking about the last provincial election in Manitoba, held in October 2011, would you say that you followed the election very closely, somewhat closely, not very closely, or not at all closely?</i>		
<i>Q19. Thinking about the various political parties that participated in the election, would you say that you were very knowledgeable, somewhat knowledgeable, not very knowledgeable, or not at all knowledgeable about their policies and election platforms?</i>		
	<b>Non-voters (n=400)</b>	<b>Voters (n=403)</b>
<b>Follow election*</b>		
Very closely	15%	27%
Somewhat closely	37%	60%
Not very closely	23%	10%
Not at all closely	25%	3%
<b>Knowledge of the policies and platforms*</b>		
Very knowledgeable	14%	26%
Somewhat knowledgeable	47%	67%
Not very knowledgeable	19%	6%
Not at all knowledgeable	19%	1%
Note: Non-responses are included in the calculations but not shown. Columns may not sum to 100% due to rounding.		
*Differences between voters and non-voters are statistically significant (chi-square probability<.001).		

## 4.0 Motivators to vote or not vote

In the previous section, it appears that voters are more engaged by the electoral process than non-voters. In this section, we attempt to identify changes that may motivate non-voters to vote and reinforce current voters' participation.

### 4.1 Importance of voting

Whether they voted in the recent provincial election or not, most respondents believe that it is very important that people vote in elections.<sup>8</sup>

- ▶ About 9 non-voters in 10 think it is at least somewhat important, including over 6 in 10 who think it is very important or essential to vote in elections. Only about 1 in 10 think it is not important.
- ▶ It is not surprising that almost all voters (99%) think it is at least somewhat important to vote in elections, including 95% who think it is very important or essential.

See Figure 8.

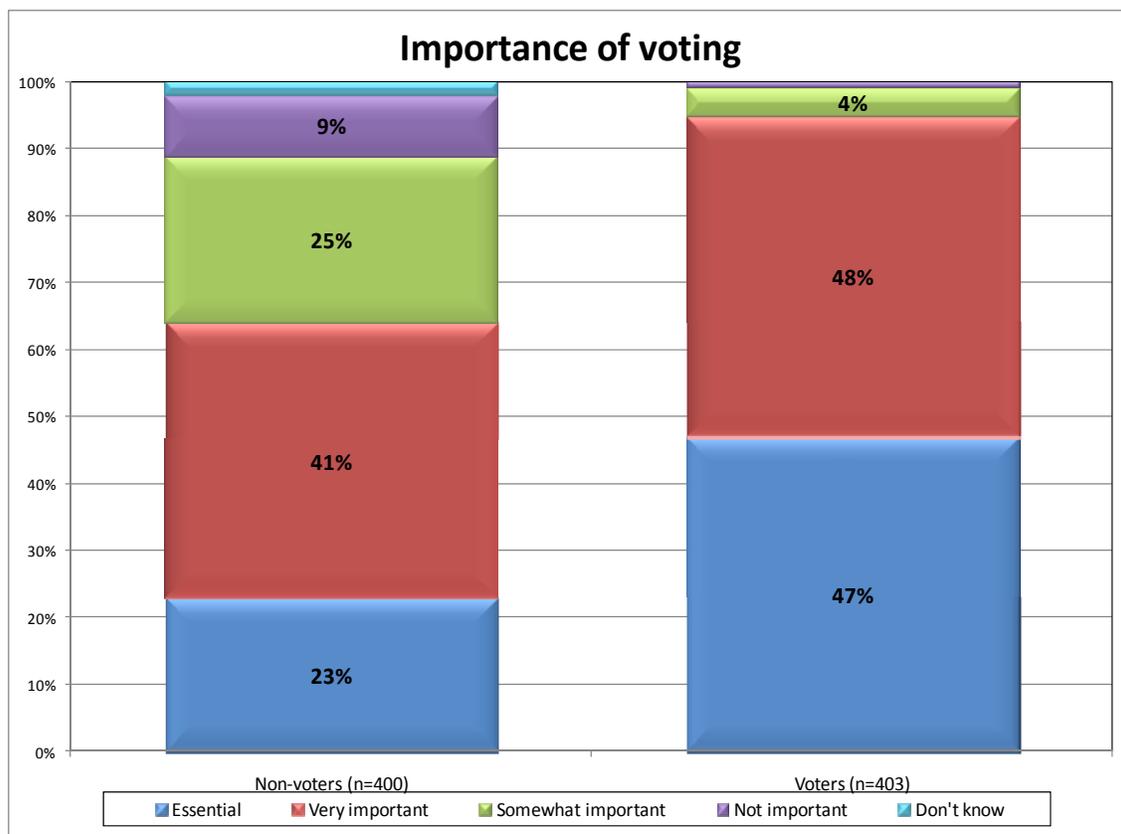


Figure 8

<sup>8</sup> Question 20 read: *In your view, how critical is it that people vote in elections? Is it essential, very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not at all important?* Differences between voters and non-voters are statistically significant (chi-square probability < .001).

We asked those who rated voting as at least somewhat important, why they think it is important. The reasons given are similar whether the respondent voted or did not vote in the 2011 provincial election. The reasons tend to fall into one of two broad categories: voting is important because it influences the outcome of the election, and voting is important for its own sake.

For many, the importance of voting is in the result or outcome. Both voters and non-voters say that voting is the way for Manitobans' voices to be heard or that is about having a say in how things are done. They say that voting is the only way to change things or make a difference, or more simply it is the way we choose government or support a candidate. Voting gives the people the right to complain, and conversely those who do not vote, do not have this right.

For others, the importance of voting is less about outcomes and more about the act of voting itself. Voters are more likely than non-voters to say that voting is about exercising a right; it is a privilege that must be used to protect democracy. More simply, the system is said not to work if people do not vote, and as such, it is not only important, it is everyone's duty.

See Table 7.

<b>Table 7: Reason why it is important to vote</b>		
<b>Q21. Why is it important that people vote?</b>		
<b>Reasons</b>	<b>Non-voters (n=358)</b>	<b>Voters (n=398)</b>
<b>Affect outcome</b>		
To let the majority's/Manitobans' voice be heard	18%	15%
To have a voice/a say in how things are done	17%	20%
Only way to change things/Only way to make a difference	12%	14%
Choosing a government/Government decisions affect everyone	12%	11%
No right to complain if we don't vote	10%	17%
To support/oppose a candidate/party	8%	5%
<b>Importance of the act of voting</b>		
Exercise right/privilege/To protect democracy	17%	27%
System doesn't work if people don't vote	7%	7%
Voting is important/People should vote	3%	4%
Duty or responsibility to vote	2%	7%
Other reasons	5%	3%
Don't know/no particular reason	6%	1%

Note: Respondents could provide more than one answer. Therefore, columns may not sum to 100%.

## 4.2 Attitudes toward voting process

As we saw above, the majority of voters and non-voters say that voting is important, so it may not be surprising that both groups also believe in a citizen’s obligation to vote. However, non-voters are more likely than voters to agree that the system is not working.

We asked voters and non-voters to rate their level of agreement with a series of statements, where 1 means that they strongly disagree and 10 means they strongly agree. For our purposes, a rating of 6 or higher indicated that respondents agree at least somewhat and ratings of 8, 9 or 10 indicate a strong agreement.

- ▶ *Voting is every Manitoban's duty as a good citizen.* Two non-voters in 3 (66%) agree at least somewhat that voting is the duty of good citizens, including half who strongly agree. This suggests that many non-voters wanted to vote in the 2011 provincial election but were distracted from doing so. About 9 in 10 voters agree at least somewhat with this statement (91%), including over 8 in 10 voters who agree strongly.
- ▶ *When people don't vote, it tells us that the system is not working.* Non-voters are more likely than voters to agree with this statement. About 2 non-voters in 3 (65%) agree at least somewhat, including about half who agree strongly with this statement. Voters are less likely to see not voting as an indication of a problem with the system. Still, over half of voters agree somewhat (54%), including almost 4 voters in 10 who agree strongly.

**Table 8: Attitudes toward voting process**

Q32-33. Now I'd like to get your opinion on other statements. Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with each, using a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means you strongly disagree and 10 means you strongly agree.

Statement	Strong agreement (Rating of 8-10 out of 10)	
	Non-voters (n=400)	Voters (n=403)
Voting is every Manitoban's duty as a good citizen*	51%	84%
When people don't vote, it tells us that the system is not working	48%	38%

\* Difference between voters and non-voters is statistically significant (chi-square probability <.001).

Note: Non-responses are excluded from the proportions.

### 4.3 Attitudes toward political parties and issues

Non-voters are more likely to find the existing political parties wanting, that is, they did not have a plan to address the issues of import to them or did not feel there was a choice in parties that meets their needs.

We asked respondents to rate their level of agreement (or disagreement) with a series of statements about political parties and issues.

- ▶ *None of the political parties in the last provincial election had a plan to address the issues that are important to me.* Over 4 non-voters in 10 (45%) agree at least somewhat with this statement, including almost 3 in 10 who agree strongly. Conversely, 1 in 3 non-voters (33%) disagree at least somewhat (a rating of 0 to 4 out of 10), suggesting that some non-voters could have chosen a party to vote for that met their needs. About 1 non-voter in 5 was neutral (a rating of 5 out of 10), suggesting that they are not sure if this is the case and possibly reflecting their lack of knowledge of the party platforms. Even among voters, 3 voters in 10 (31%) agree at least somewhat with this statement, including 16% who agree strongly, which suggests they vote in spite of this perception of the political parties.
- ▶ *There is no political party in Manitoba that I really agree with.* Almost 4 non-voters in 10 (39%) agree at least somewhat, including 3 in 10 who agree strongly. A majority of non-voters disagree or are neutral suggesting that there are political parties that they agree with or that they are not entirely sure. Voters are less likely to agree. About 1 voter in 4 (25%) agrees, at least somewhat, including 1 in 8 who agree strongly.
- ▶ *Most of the issues that governments have to deal with are too complicated for voters to understand.* About 3 non-voters in 10 (29%) agree, at least somewhat, with this statement, including about 1 in 6 who agree strongly. This compares with about 1 in 5 voters who agree somewhat (22%), including 1 in 10 who agree strongly.

Table 9 provides the percentage of respondents who agree strongly (a rating of 8 or higher).

<b>Table 9: Attitudes toward political process/issues</b>		
<i>Q25-27. Now I'd like to get your opinion on other statements. Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with each, using a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means you strongly disagree and 10 means you strongly agree.</i>		
Statement	Strong agreement (Rating of 8-10 out of 10)	
	Non-voters (n=400)	Voters (n=403)
None of the political parties in the last provincial election had a plan to address the issues that are important to me.*	29%	16%
There is no political party in Manitoba that I really agree with.*	28%	14%
Most of the issues that governments have to deal with are too complicated for voters to understand.	16%	10%

\* Difference between voters and non-voters is statistically significant (chi-square probability<.001).  
 Note: Non-responses are excluded from the proportions.

#### 4.4 Attitudes toward voting

The closeness of the election race is a feature in both voters' and non-voters' decisions to participate. That being said, non-voters are more likely to feel that their vote does not really matter to the outcome. Partly, this reflects not the race itself, but the belief that the outcome has no impact on them personally. However, a majority of non-voters do not agree with any of these suggestions.

We asked respondents to agree or disagree with a series of statements on voting.

- ▶ *I'm more likely to vote if the race is close.* This attitude is shared by both voters and non-voters. There is something about the closeness of the race that makes some feel that their vote matters more. Over 4 in 10 (44%) of the non-voters agree at least somewhat, including over 3 in 10 who agree strongly that they are more likely to vote if the race is close. Voters are slightly less likely to agree, suggesting that they vote regardless of the closeness of the race. Even so, about 1 voter in 3 (36%) also agrees at least somewhat that they are more likely to vote if the race is close, including over 1 in 4 who agree strongly.
- ▶ *Generally, the outcome of provincial elections has no direct effect on me.* Over 1 non-voter in 3 (37%) at least somewhat agrees with this statement, including almost 1 in 4 who agree strongly. This compares with less than 1 voter in 5 (18%) who agrees at least somewhat, including 1 in 10 who agree strongly. So, regardless of their voting behaviour in 2011, a majority of voters and non-voters say that, in fact, the outcomes of provincial elections do have some direct effect on them.
- ▶ *My vote doesn't really matter in my electoral division.* Even though they did not vote, most non-voters would not agree that their vote does not matter either in their electoral division or, as we will see in the next bullet, in a provincial election in general. That being said, 1 non-voter in 3 (35%) agrees at least somewhat with this statement, including about 1 in 4 who agree strongly. This compares with 17% of voters who agree at least somewhat, and over 1 in 10 who agree strongly.
- ▶ *My vote doesn't really matter in a provincial election.* Similarly, 1 non-voter in 3 (32%) agrees at least somewhat with this statement, including 1 in 5 who agree strongly. Again, voters are less likely to agree (17%) even somewhat.

Table 10 provides the percentage of respondents who strongly agree (a rating of 8 or higher).

<b>Table 10: Attitudes toward voting</b>		
<i>Q23, 24, 29, 35. Now I'd like to get your opinion on other statements. Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with each, using a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means you strongly disagree and 10 means you strongly agree.</i>		
Statement	Strong agreement (Rating of 8-10 out of 10)	
	Non-voters (n=400)	Voters (n=403)
I am more likely to vote if the election race is close.	32%	28%
My vote doesn't really matter in my electoral division (riding).*	27%	13%
Generally, the outcome of provincial elections has no direct effect on me.*	24%	10%
My vote doesn't really matter in a provincial election.*	21%	14%

\* Difference between voters and non-voters is statistically significant (chi-square probability < .001).  
Note: Non-responses are excluded from the proportions.

## 4.5 Encouraging voting

Most voters and non-voters support activities that might encourage voting. Although non-voters tend to have more negative attitudes towards the voting process, political parties, and the value of their vote in general, the majority think it is important to educate children on the benefits of political participation, whether that be through their parent or at school. We asked respondents to rate their level of agreement with these statements:

- ▶ *Parents should instill in their children the importance of voting.* About 3 in 4 non-voters (77%) agree at least somewhat with this statement, including almost 6 in 10 who agree strongly. Voters are significantly more likely to agree with this statement. Indeed, almost all voters (95%) agree at least somewhat.
- ▶ *Schools should do more to educate children on the benefits of voting and political participation.* The vast majority of both agree that schools should do more. Around 7 non-voters in 10 (71%) agree at least somewhat with this statement, including over half who agree strongly. Voters are more supportive, with more than 8 in 10 (84%) agreeing at least somewhat and 2 in 3 agreeing strongly. Voters are more likely to support the involvement of both parents and schools in delivering a positive message about voting, which is interesting since voters are less likely to have school-aged children.

Table 11 shows those who agree strongly with these statements.

<b>Table 11: Attitudes toward encouraging voting</b>		
<i>Q31, 34. Now I'd like to get your opinion on other statements. Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with each, using a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means you strongly disagree and 10 means you strongly agree.</i>		
<b>Statement</b>	<b>Strong agreement (Rating of 8-10 out of 10)</b>	
	<b>Non-voters (n=400)</b>	<b>Voters (n=403)</b>
Parents should instill in their children the importance of voting.*	58%	89%
Schools should do more to educate children on the benefits of voting and political participation.*	56%	68%

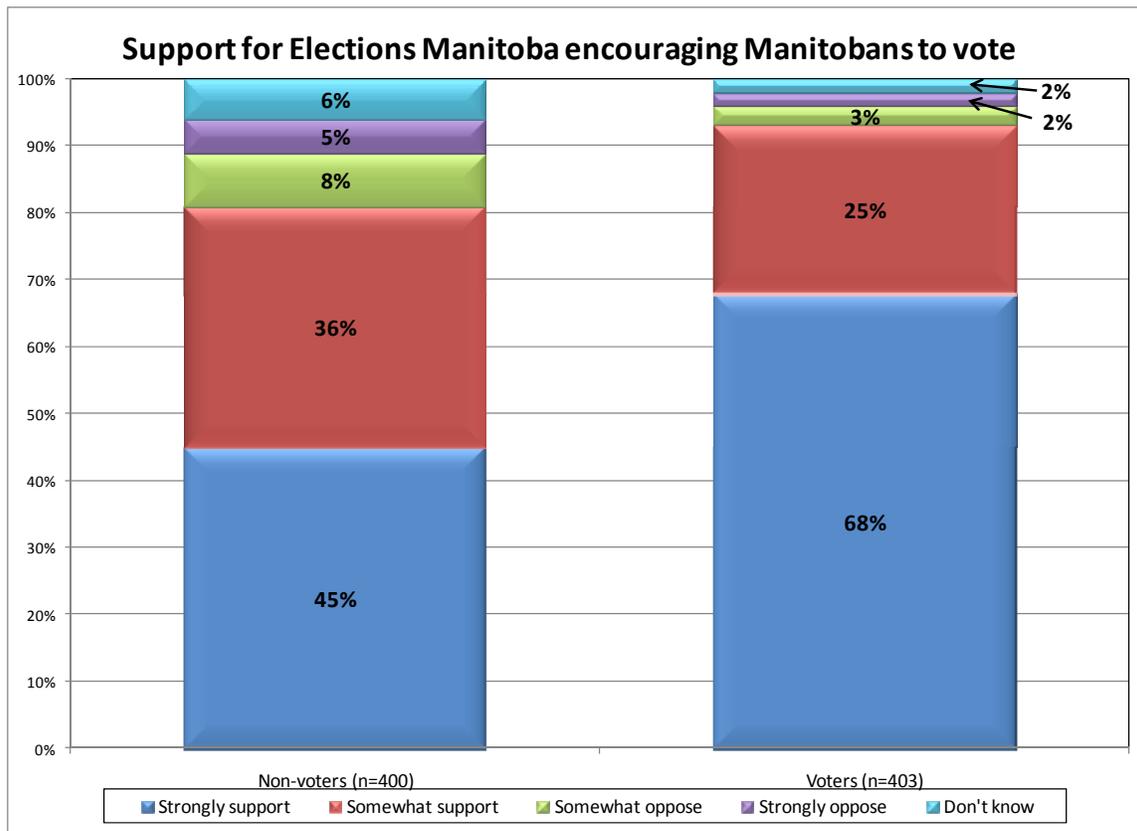
\* Difference between voters and non-voters is statistically significant (chi-square probability < .001).  
Note: Non-responses are excluded from the proportions.

#### 4.6 Roles of Elections Manitoba

We explained that Elections Manitoba is an independent agency responsible for running provincial elections. We asked respondents whether they would support or oppose Elections Manitoba’s encouraging Manitobans to vote by telling them why their vote matters, why it is important, and what the consequences are if people do not vote.<sup>9</sup>

Overwhelmingly, both voters and non-voters would support Elections Manitoba undertaking such a campaign. Some 8 non-voters in 10 would support such an initiative, including over 4 in 10 who would strongly support it. Over 9 voters in 10 would support such an initiative, including almost 7 in 10 who would strongly support it.

See Figure 9.



**Figure 9**

<sup>9</sup> Question 43 reads: *Elections Manitoba is an independent, non-political agency responsible for running provincial elections. Do you support or oppose Elections Manitoba specifically encouraging Manitobans to vote by telling them why their vote matters, why it is important, and what the consequences are if people do not vote? Do you strongly/somewhat support/oppose it?* Differences between voters and non-voters are statistically significant (chi-square probability < .001).

#### 4.7 Encourage non-voters to vote

We also asked non-voters what would have encouraged them to vote in the recent election. We again grouped their responses into broad categories that seem to suggest that they are disassociated, distracted, or displaced.

- ▶ **Disassociated.** Over 1 in 5 (21%) say they would have been more likely to vote if they had more trust or confidence in candidates or the government. Some (11%) explicitly state that “nothing” would have encouraged them to vote. Others say that they would have been more likely vote if the issues were of greater interest or if politicians addressed issues that interested them (8%), or if the outcome was not already known (4%).
- ▶ **Distracted.** Few offer up solutions that might address the fact that voters are often distracted. However, some do suggest that if they had more information about the candidates or parties this might encourage them to vote (8%).
- ▶ **Displaced** Some say that if technical or process issues had been addressed, they would have been more likely to vote. Some say that if the election had been on a more convenient day they would have been more likely to vote (7%). A few respondents say that if the voting locations had been more accessible or convenient (5%), they would have been more likely to vote. A few others suggest that they would have voted if they had had more information on when and where to vote (3%); easier access to advance voting (2%); or if there were alternative methods to vote such as online (2%).

About 1 in 5 could not think of anything that would have encouraged them to vote, saying they did not know. See Table 12 for non-voters’ unaided suggestions. The responses provided for 2011 are similar to those in 2007 and 2003, although it should be noted that the proportion who say that nothing would encourage them to vote has steadily decreased since 2003 from 19% to 11% in the current survey.

<b>Table 12: What would encourage non-voters to vote</b>			
<i>Q4. What, if anything, would have encouraged you to vote in the recent election?</i>			
	<b>2011 (n=400)</b>	<b>2007 (n=400)</b>	<b>2003 (n=410)</b>
<b>Disassociated</b>			
Having greater trust/confidence in candidates	21%	18%	18%
Nothing would encourage them to vote	11%	16%	19%
If there were important issues/Addressing issues of interest	8%	7%	7%
If outcome wasn't already determined	4%	4%	3%
Feeling more valued/civic minded	4%	-	-
<b>Distracted</b>			
More informed about candidates/issues	8%	8%	9%
<b>Displaced</b>			
Election on a more convenient day/On a different day	7%	7%	7%
Voting locations more easily accessible	5%	4%	6%
More informed about when/where election was	3%	4%	5%
Alternate ways to vote (Internet, phone, mail)	2%	<1%	2%
Advanced voting easier to access	2%	<1%	1%
Voting locations open earlier/later/longer	<1%	2%	3%
<b>Other</b>			
Usually do vote/If had been well enough to vote	5%	4%	-
Other	4%	5%	6%
Don't know	22%	24%	20%

Note: Respondents could provide more than one answer. Therefore, column may not sum to 100%.

#### 4.8 Satisfaction with current system

We explained to respondents the nature of the current electoral system in Manitoba. In particular, that for provincial elections people vote in an electoral division and the candidate with the most votes wins. We asked respondents how satisfied or dissatisfied they are with the present electoral system. Most voters and non-voters are at least somewhat satisfied with it.

- ▶ About 7 non-voters in 10 are satisfied, although only 1 in 5 are very satisfied.
- ▶ Voters are more satisfied, with over 8 in 10 being at least somewhat satisfied, including almost 4 in 10 who are very satisfied.

We also asked those who say that they were dissatisfied with the current system if their dissatisfaction discourages them from voting. Among those who were dissatisfied, about half of non-voters (47%) and 3 in 10 of voters (29%) say that the electoral system discourages them at least somewhat from voting. However, this represents 12% of all non-voters and 4% of voters.

<b>Table 13: Satisfaction with current electoral system</b>		
<i>Q44. As you know, for Manitoba provincial elections, people vote in an electoral division, and the candidate with the most votes wins. In general, how satisfied are you with the present electoral system? Are you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied?</i>		
<i>Q45. Does the current method of deciding who wins discourage you from voting?</i>		
	<b>Non-voters (n=400)</b>	<b>Voters (n=403)</b>
<b>Satisfaction*</b>		
Very satisfied	20%	37%
Somewhat satisfied	51%	47%
Somewhat dissatisfied	14%	11%
Very dissatisfied	11%	3%
Not sure	5%	2%
<b>Discourage you from voting</b>		
	<b>(n=98)</b>	<b>(n=58)**</b>
Yes, very much	21%	5%
Yes, somewhat	26%	24%
No	50%	71%
Note: Columns may not sum to 100% due to rounding.		
* Difference between voters and non-voters is statistically significant (chi-square probability<.001).		
** Caution small sample		

### 4.8.1 Proportional representation

Our current system of first-past-the-post is based on the premise that the winner-takes-all. No matter how many votes a candidate receives, if it is the greatest number in a particular electoral division, that candidate wins.

The idea of changing the electoral system so that total votes cast is reflected in the number of seats won appears to make voting more appealing for many respondents, both current voters and non-voters. However, for others, this fundamental change in the electoral system would result in them being less likely to vote.

We briefly explained proportional representation to respondents and asked them if they would be more or less likely to vote if Manitoba adopted such a system.

As shown in Table 14:

- ▶ About half the non-voters (52%) say that they would be more or much more likely to vote under a proportional representation model. However, only 14% say that such a change would make them much more likely. In fact, 1 non-voter in 5 say that they would be less or much less likely to vote under such a system.
- ▶ About 4 voters in 10 (37%) say that they would be more or much more likely to vote under such a model, but again, many — 1 in 7 — would be less likely.

<b>Table 14: Impact of proportional representation*</b>		
<i>Q46. What if we had a different system in which the seats would be divided among the political parties according to the total percentage of votes they get? If this system, known as "proportional representation," was implemented in Manitoba, would you be much more likely, more likely, less likely, or much less likely to vote?</i>		
	<b>Non-voters (n=400)</b>	<b>Voters (n=403)</b>
Much more likely	14%	11%
More likely	38%	26%
Makes no difference	21%	41%
Less likely	12%	10%
Much less likely	8%	5%
Don't know	8%	7%

Note: Columns may not sum to 100% due to rounding.  
 \* Difference between voters and non-voters are statistically significant (chi-square probability<.001).

### 4.8.2 Online voting

Table 15 shows the results of two different questions asked of voters and non-voters. Voters were asked how likely they would be to vote online in the next provincial election if such an option was available on the Elections Manitoba website. Non-voters were asked how much more likely they would be to vote at all, if they could vote online on the Elections Manitoba website. For many current voters, online voting is a convenience that they would take advantage of. For many non-voters, the availability of online voting would actually encourage them to vote in the next provincial election.

- ▶ Almost 6 non-voters in 10 (58%) say that they would be more likely or much more likely to vote in the next provincial election if they could do so online on the Elections Manitoba website. However, about 1 in 6 (17%) say they would be less likely to vote.
- ▶ Over half (55%) of voters say that if the option of voting online was available, they would be somewhat or very likely to use it.

<b>Table 15: Online voting</b>		
<i>Q47. (IF NOT VOTE IN 2011) Thinking ahead four years from now to the next provincial election, would you be much more likely, more likely, no more likely, or less likely to vote if you could do so online on the Elections Manitoba website?</i>		
<i>Q48. (IF VOTED IN 2011) Thinking ahead four years from now to the next provincial election, if you could vote online on the Elections Manitoba website, would you be very likely, somewhat likely, not very likely, or not at all likely to do so?</i>		
	<b>Non-voters (n=400)</b>	<b>Voters (n=403)</b>
Much more likely/very likely	32%	40%
More likely/somewhat likely	26%	15%
No more likely/Makes no difference	24%	9%
Less likely	17%	-
Not very likely	-	11%
Not at all likely	-	24%
Don't know	2%	1%

Note: Columns may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

A similar question was last asked following the 2003 provincial election.<sup>10</sup> While there is growing comfort with the internet, an online option has not increased those likely to vote, although it has increased the number of those who are much more likely. Overall, in our 2011 survey, about the same proportion (58%) of non-voters as in 2003 (56%) would be more likely or much more likely to vote if an online option was available. In 2011, more report they would be much more likely (32%) than in 2003 (21%).

However, in 2011, slightly fewer would be less likely to vote (17%) than in 2003 (20%) if this option was available.

<sup>10</sup> The questions asked of non-voters following the 2003 provincial election was: *Now I'd like you to consider some different methods of voting. Think ahead three to four years from now to the next provincial election and imagine the technology allows it and the system was provided by Elections Manitoba. Again thinking ahead three to four years from now to the next provincial election, would you be much more likely, more likely, no more likely, or less likely to vote if you could do so online?*

<b>Table 16: Online voting: 2011 and 2003</b>		
	<b>Non-voters</b>	
	<b>2011 (n=400)</b>	<b>2003 (n=402)</b>
Much more likely	32%	21%
More likely	26%	35%
No more likely	24%	22%
Less likely	17%	20%
Don't know	2%	2%

Note: Columns may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

As well, a similar question was asked of voters after the 2003 provincial election.<sup>11</sup> In 2011, slightly more voters (55%) would be likely to use online voting if available than back in 2003 (49%). The real difference appears to be in those who would be very likely (40% in 2011 compared to 29% in 2003), possibly reflecting people's increased comfort with the internet.

<b>Table 17: Online voting: 2011 and 2003</b>		
	<b>Voters</b>	
	<b>2011 (n=403)</b>	<b>2003 (n=410)</b>
Very likely	40%	29%
Somewhat likely/likely	15%	20%
Not likely	35%	48%
Don't know/no difference	10%	3%

### **4.8.3 Concerns about online voting**

Although many current non-voters would be more likely to vote if an online option was available, and many current voters would be more likely to vote if this method was available, most also have concerns. Current voters (73%) are more likely to have concerns than non-voters (55%).

- ▶ The most common concern among both voters and non-voters is that there is a greater chance for voter fraud when online voting is an option. They are concerned not only the integrity of the vote (e.g., rigging the vote, ensuring the right person voting), but about hacking the website.
- ▶ Some are concerned that there are confidentiality issues, and that it might be easier to know not only who voted, but how they voted.
- ▶ Some others have practical concerns: they do not have access to the internet or do not feel competent to use this method of voting, or worry about the system crashing.

<sup>11</sup> The question asked of voters after the 2003 provincial election was: *Again thinking ahead three to four years from now to the next provincial election, instead of going to the polling station, how likely would you be to vote \_\_\_\_ if available? Would you say you would be very likely, somewhat likely, not very likely, or not at all likely?*

- ▶ A few say that they have concerns about the verification of the voter and wonder how one would check to ensure the accuracy of the vote, or wonder more generally how to police the online process.

<b>Table 18: Online voting</b>		
<i>Q49. What concerns, if any, would you have about voting online?</i>		
	<b>Non-voters (n=400)</b>	<b>Voters (n=403)</b>
Integrity of vote: Security/Fraud/Hackers: Rigging the vote; Ensure right person is voting	33%	40%
Privacy/Confidentiality/Anonymous: People might know how others voted	10%	10%
Computer/Internet Issues: Don't have one / Don't have access to Internet / Computer illiterate	8%	10%
Legitimacy/Mistakes: No method to check accuracy/validity of vote; Is vote going to right person	5%	5%
Prefer current method/in person / Do not feel comfortable/trust online voting	4%	9%
Accountability/Verification: Not knowing if votes counted	2%	5%
Technical issues: Data can disappear in a key stroke/System could crash	1%	4%
How to police/manage/regulate/observe the process	1%	2%
Other	2%	2%
Don't know / no response	5%	3%
No concerns/Positive comments	40%	25%

Note: Respondents could provide more than one answer. Therefore, columns may not sum to 100%.

Compared to eight years ago when this question was last asked, the concerns remain very similar. Compared to 2003, both non-voters and voters are more likely to raise concerns in 2011, with issues surrounding the integrity of the vote (security, fraud, hacking) being more common in 2011. See Table 19.

<b>Table 19: Online voting: 2011 and 2003</b>				
<i>Q49. What concerns, if any, would you have about voting online?</i>				
	<b>Non-voters</b>		<b>Voters</b>	
	<b>2011 (n=400)</b>	<b>2003 (n=402)</b>	<b>2011 (n=403)</b>	<b>2003 (n=410)</b>
Security/Fraud/Hackers/Integrity of vote	33%	25%	40%	30%
Privacy/Confidentiality/Anonymous	10%	8%	10%	10%
Computer/Internet Issues	8%	9%	10%	17%
Legitimacy/Mistakes	5%	4%	5%	10%
Prefer current method/in person	4%	2%	9%	3%
Accountability/Verification	2%	1%	5%	2%
Technical issues	1%	-	4%	-
How to police/manage/regulate/observe the process	1%	-	2%	-
Other	2%	1%	2%	2%
Don't know / no response	5%	2%	3%	4%
No concerns/Positive comments	40%	55%	24%	37%

Note: Respondents could provide more than one answer. Therefore, column may not sum to 100%.

## 5.0 Types of non-voters

In this section, we examine some of the key characteristics of non-voters in more depth.

### 5.1 Age of non-voters

We noted earlier that non-voters tend to be younger than voters, but even among non-voters, age plays an important role in their reasons for not voting and in their support for various alternatives.

#### 5.1.1 Age and past voting

Among non-voters, those in the youngest age cohort (18 to 29) are the most likely to report voting in none (even though they would have been most likely to be eligible to vote in at least one). Almost 6 in 10 say they did not vote in any of the previous three elections.

The older the non-voters, the more likely they are to have voted. However, even in the oldest age cohort (55 years of age or older) only about 1 in 3 voted in all three elections. See Table 20.

	Non-voters* (n=390)		
	18 to 29	30 to 54	55 or older
All three	8%	22%	34%
Two of three	16%	20%	20%
One of three	20%	17%	21%
None	57%	42%	25%

Note: Excludes those who were ineligible for all three elections. Columns may not sum to 100% due to rounding.  
 \* Results are statistically significant (chi-square probability < .001).

#### 5.1.2 Age and reasons for not voting

As we have noted in early reports on voting behaviour, young people have always been less likely to vote than older adults. It has been argued that participation is part of a person's "life cycle," with young non-voters becoming voters as they mature, get married, and have a family. In part, it is believed that they participate because issues now affect them (and their families) more directly (education, health care, etc.). The concern is not so much that young people do not vote, per se, but that there appears to be a growth in non-participation among young adults. While a number of these individuals will go through the typical cycle of engagement and then participation, the main concern is that a proportion will never become engaged. The act of voting itself increases the likelihood that an individual will vote in the future. Therefore, as the pool of young voters shrinks, so (the argument goes) does the proportion of future voters. The larger the pool of non-voters among the youngest age group, the smaller the number of individuals who will vote in the future. Although this hypothesis cannot be addressed directly through this research, we can look for hints of the future behaviour of young non-voters.

Our survey indicates that young adults (18 to 29) are most likely to report that a lack of knowledge and lack of interest are the barriers that prevented them from voting in the last provincial election. Of the eight reasons for not voting tested with respondents, age was a significant factor in the perceived importance of two.

- ▶ Young adults (18 to 29) are more likely to say that not knowing enough about the parties, policies, or candidates was a very important reason for not voting. Indeed, half of those in this age cohort say that this reason was very important. As respondents get older, they are less likely to say this was very important in their decision.
- ▶ Younger respondents are also more likely to say that being too busy was very important in their decision not to vote. About 3 in 10 of those 18 to 29 years of age say that this reason was very important, compared to less than 1 in 10 of those 55 and older. Being “too busy” to vote is another way of saying that voting is not a priority and that other activities in their lives are more important.

See Table 21.

<b>Table 21: Age and reasons for not voting</b>			
	<b>Very important (n=390)</b>		
	<b>18 to 29</b>	<b>30 to 54</b>	<b>55 or older</b>
Did not know enough about the parties, policies, or candidates*	51%	32%	16%
Too busy*	35%	25%	7%

\*Note: Differences in results by age group are statistically significant (chi-square probability<.001).

It is not surprising then that young non-voters (18 to 29) are less likely than older non-voters to say that they followed the 2011 election closely (33%) or that they were knowledgeable about the policies and platforms of the various parties (37%). Indeed, only 2% of this age group report following the election very closely and none report being very knowledgeable about policies and election platforms.

See Table 22.

<b>Table 22: Knowledge of issue/follow campaign</b>			
<b>During 2011 provincial election...</b>	<b>Age of non-voter (n=390)</b>		
	<b>18 to 29</b>	<b>30 to 54</b>	<b>55 or older</b>
Followed the election somewhat or very closely	33%	49%	63%
Somewhat/very knowledgeable about the policies and election platforms*	37%	57%	76%

\*Note: Differences in results by age group are statistically significant (chi-square probability<.001).

### 5.1.3 Age and attitudes toward voting

However, attitudes toward the concept of voting, as opposed to the act of voting, do not change much with age. Most non-voters, regardless of age, say that it is very important or essential that people vote. Similarly, regardless of age, few think it is not important.

This is a positive finding and suggests that, although they are not yet participating, young adults recognize the importance of voting and may do so in the future. However, it also reflects the fact that non-voters can believe in the importance of voting, while not thinking their own participation in the process is important. See Table 23.

<b>Table 23: Importance of voting by age of non-voter</b>			
	<b>Age of non-voter (n=390)</b>		
	<b>18 to 29</b>	<b>30 to 54</b>	<b>55+</b>
Very important/essential	59%	64%	68%
Somewhat important	35%	25%	22%
Not important	4%	10%	8%
Don't know/no response	2%	1%	2%

Regardless of their age, non-voters share many similar attitudes towards voting.

- ▶ **Attitudes toward the voting process.** Regardless of their age, more than half agree that when people do not vote it suggests that the system is not working. Over half also agree that voting is every Manitoban's duty as a good citizen. Younger voters are less likely to agree with both of these questions, although neither difference is statistically significant.
- ▶ **Attitudes toward political process/issues.** Regardless of age, non-voters share some attitudes regarding political parties and issues. Many of these non-voters agree that there are no political parties they really agree with and that none of the political parties address the issues that are important to them. The youngest age group is more likely than older non-voters to agree that the issues are too complicated for voters to understand.
- ▶ **Attitudes toward voting.** Regardless of age, many non-voters say they are more likely to vote if the race is close. (Although, the 2011 election suggests this is actually not the case.) The survey findings suggest that young non-voters are more cynical about the outcome of provincial elections. While almost half of those 18 to 29 agree the outcome has no direct effect on them, only about 1 in 3 of those 30 or older agree. (This result is not statistically significant.)
- ▶ **Attitudes toward encouraging voting.** Although not statistically significant, the youngest age group is most likely to agree that schools should do more to educate children on the benefits of voting. Possibly because they feel that they lack knowledge, most young non-voters support the idea of schools doing more to educate children on the benefits of voting and political participation. A majority in all age groups also think parents should do more to instill the importance of voting in their children. However, possibly because they do not necessarily agree with their parents' political positions, young non-voters are slightly less likely than older non-voters to agree that parents should instill the importance of voting in their children. See Table 24.

<b>Table 24: Attitudes toward voting and political parties by age</b>			
<b>Agree that...</b> (Rating of 6 or higher out of 10)	<b>Age of non-voter (n=390)</b>		
	<b>18 to 29</b>	<b>30 to 54</b>	<b>55 or older</b>
<b>Attitudes toward voting process</b>			
When people don't vote, it tells us that the system is not working	58%	66%	65%
Voting is every Manitoban's duty as a good citizen	54%	67%	71%
<b>Attitudes toward political process/issues</b>			
None of the political parties in the last provincial election had a plan to address the issues that are important to me	50%	45%	45%
Most of the issues that governments have to deal with are too complicated for voters to understand.*	43%	29%	25%
There is no political party in Manitoba that I really agree with.	30%	42%	36%
<b>Attitudes toward voting</b>			
I'm more likely to vote if the election race is close	49%	43%	43%
Generally, the outcome of provincial elections has no direct effect on me	49%	37%	33%
My vote doesn't really matter in a provincial election	26%	33%	34%
My vote doesn't really matter in electoral division	24%	35%	40%
<b>Attitudes toward encouraging voting</b>			
Schools should do more to educate children on the benefits of voting and political participation	86%	71%	64%
Parents should instill in their children the importance of voting	59%	77%	77%
*Note: Differences in results by age group are statistically significant (chi-square probability<.001). Note: Non-responses are excluded from the proportions.			

As Table 25 shows, those in the youngest age cohort are not significantly different from older respondents in terms of their likelihood to vote in the next provincial election. However, it also shows that if the proportion of young adults who do not vote is growing, then, overall a larger number will remain unlikely to vote in the future.

<b>Table 25: Likelihood of voting in next provincial election by age of non-voter</b>			
<b>Vote in the next provincial election</b>	<b>Age of non-voter (n=390)</b>		
	<b>18 to 29</b>	<b>30 to 54</b>	<b>55 or older</b>
Very likely	39%	36%	47%
Somewhat likely	39%	31%	23%
Unlikely	20%	29%	23%
Don't know/no response	2%	5%	7%
Note: Columns may not sum to 100% due to rounding.			

## 5.2 Past voting behaviour

About 4 non-voters in 10 had not voted in any of the three previous elections. This finding is very similar to that in 2007, the last time we conducted this survey.

Based on the findings from this survey, in the 2011 provincial election, about 17% of all eligible electors might be classified as persistent non-voters. About 27% might be considered irregular non-voters, who, like many who voted in the 2011 provincial election, do not vote in every election.<sup>12</sup>

Persistent non-voters tend to be younger than irregular voters. About 1 persistent non-voter in 5 comes from the 18 to 29 age cohort, although they account for just over 1 in 10 of irregular voters. These persistent non-voters often have different attitudes than irregular non-voters (i.e., those who voted in at least one of the last three elections). These results are very similar to those in 2007.

Age	Persistent non-voters (n=152)	Irregular non-voters (n=248)
18 to 29	19%	9%
30 to 54	59%	50%
55 and older	20%	38%
No response	2%	3%

Note: Differences in results by persistent and irregular non-voters are statistically significant (chi-square probability <.001).

### 5.2.1 Knowledge of election

Persistent non-voters are more likely than irregular voters to report:

- ▶ Not being interested in the 2011 provincial election. Persistent non-voters are more likely to report that they did not follow the 2011 provincial election closely (72%). Irregular non-voters are more involved in the process. Unlike persistent non-voters, a majority of irregular non-voters followed the 2011 provincial election somewhat or very closely (only 33% did not).
- ▶ Not knowing about the policies and platforms of the various political parties (59%). Irregular non-voters tend to think of themselves as somewhat or very knowledgeable about the policies and platforms of parties in the 2011 provincial election (only 23% say they are not).

<sup>12</sup> These estimates are based on simply multiplying the proportion of non-voters in the 2011 provincial elections (44%) by the proportion of non-voters in our survey who are defined as persistent (38%) or irregular (62%). In 2007, we calculated similar estimates: 17% of the eligible electors were persistent and 26% were irregular non-voters.

<b>Table 27: Knowledge of 2011 election</b>		
	<b>Persistent non-voters (n=152)</b>	<b>Irregular non-voters (n=248)</b>
<b>Followed 2011 election*</b>		
Very closely	5%	21%
Somewhat closely	23%	46%
Not very closely	27%	21%
Not at all closely	45%	12%
<b>Knowledge of the policies and platforms*</b>		
Very knowledgeable	7%	19%
Somewhat knowledgeable	31%	57%
Not very knowledgeable	24%	15%
Not at all knowledgeable	35%	9%
Note: Non-responses are included in the calculations, but not shown. Columns for each question may not sum to 100% due to rounding. * Differences between persistent and irregular non-voters are statistically significant (chi-square probability<.001).		

### 5.2.2 Decision to not vote

Many persistent non-voters never intended to vote in the last provincial election, they decided as soon as the election was called that they would not be voting. Indeed, 4 persistent non-voters in 10 report that they knew as soon as the election was called that they would not vote. This suggests that many persistent non-voters were simply non-engaged by the election. Only about 1 in 6 made the decision on Election Day, suggesting that circumstances may have prevented them.

Irregular non-voters are much more likely to make the decision sometime after the election was called or on Election Day. Indeed, about 1 in 3 decided not to vote on the day of the election. This suggests that for many irregular non-voters it was time constraints or circumstances that prevented them from casting a ballot. See Table 28.

<b>Table 28: Decision to vote by non-voters type</b>		
<b>Decided not to vote...</b>	<b>Persistent non-voters (n=152)</b>	<b>Irregular non-voters (n=248)</b>
As soon as the election was called	40%	18%
Sometime during the election	37%	43%
On Election Day	16%	34%
Don't remember/no response	7%	5%
Note: Differences in results by persistent and irregular non-voters are statistically significant (chi-square probability<.001).		

However, persistent and irregular non-voters tend to say that the same reasons were very important in their decision not to vote. Indeed, only two reasons show differences, both of which appear logical.

- ▶ Persistent non-voters are more likely than irregular non-voters to say that they did not know enough about the parties, policies, or candidates to vote.
- ▶ Irregular non-voters (25%) are almost three times as likely as persistent non-voters (9%) to saying that being out of town was important in their decision not to vote.

<b>Table 29: Importance of reasons for not voting by type</b>		
	<b>Persistent non-voters (n=152)</b>	<b>Irregular non-voters (n=248)</b>
Did not know enough about the parties, policies, or candidates to vote	56%	41%
Out of town	9%	25%
Note: Differences in results by persistent and irregular non-voters are statistically significant (chi-square probability <.001).		

### 5.2.3 Attitudes toward voting

Perhaps it is not surprising, but persistent non-voters are much less likely than irregular non-voters to think voting is important. What might be surprising is that among both groups, the vast majority think it is at least somewhat important.

As shown in Table 30:

- ▶ 8 persistent non-voters in 10 say that it is at least somewhat important that people vote in elections, including 48% who say it is very important or essential.
- ▶ Over 9 irregular non-voters in 10 say it is at least somewhat important, including 74% who say it is very important or essential.

<b>Table 30: Importance that people vote by type of non-voter</b>		
	<b>Persistent non-voters (n=152)</b>	<b>Irregular non-voters (n=248)</b>
Essential	16%	27%
Very important	32%	47%
Somewhat important	32%	21%
Not important	16%	4%
Not sure	4%	1%
Differences in results by persistent and irregular non-voters are statistically significant (chi-square probability <.001).		

Table 31 shows the level of agreement of persistent and irregular non-voters to statements about the voting process. For many of these statements, the two types of non-voters share similar views, but on others they do not.

- ▶ **Attitudes toward the voting process.** Although a majority of both types of non-voters agree that not voting suggests that the system is not working, irregular non-voters (77%) are much more likely to agree than persistent non-voters (49%) that voting is every Manitoban's duty as a good citizen.
- ▶ **Attitudes toward political process/issues.** Interestingly, both types of non-voters are as likely to agree that none of the parties addressed issues important to them and there is no political party that they really agree with. Persistent non-voters are slightly more likely to agree that the issues the government deals with are too complex for the public to understand. However, in none of these cases does a majority agree.
- ▶ **Attitudes toward voting.** A minority of non-voters, regardless of type, agrees with statements that suggest their vote is not important. Persistent non-voters are slightly more likely than irregular non-voters to agree that the outcome of provincial elections has no direct effect on them. Conversely, irregular non-voters are more likely to agree than persistent non-voters that they are more likely to vote if the election race is close.
- ▶ **Attitudes toward encouraging voting.** Persistent non-voters are less likely to agree that parents should instill in their children the importance of voting. About half of persistent non-voters agree, compared 8 in 10 irregular non-voters. However, a majority in both groups support greater efforts in schools to teach students about the benefits of voting.

Table 31: Attitudes toward voting process		
Statement	Agree (Rating of 6 or higher out of 10)	
	Persistent non-voters (n=152)	Irregular non-voters (n=248)
<b>Attitudes toward voting process</b>		
When people don't vote, it tells us that the system is not working.	67%	63%
Voting is every Manitoban's duty as a good citizen.*	49%	77%
<b>Attitudes toward political process/issues</b>		
None of the political parties in the last provincial election had a plan to address the issues that are important to me.	51%	41%
There is no political party in Manitoba that I really agree with.	42%	37%
Most of the issues that governments have to deal with are too complicated for voters to understand.	37%	25%
<b>Attitudes toward voting</b>		
Generally, the outcome of provincial elections has no direct effect on me.	48%	30%
My vote doesn't really matter in a provincial election.	38%	29%
My vote doesn't really matter in electoral division.	36%	34%
I'm more likely to vote if the election race is close.	33%	50%
<b>Attitudes toward encouraging voting</b>		
Schools should do more to educate children on the benefits of voting and political participation.	65%	74%
Parents should instill in their children the importance of voting.	55%	85%

\* Difference between persistent and irregular non-voters is statistically significant (chi-square probability < \*.000).

Although a majority of persistent non-voters believe that voting is important, a slim majority of these non-voters do not plan to vote in the next provincial election.

- ▶ While over 4 in 10 persistent non-voters say they are at least somewhat likely to vote in the next provincial election, only 16% say that they are very likely. About half say they are unlikely to vote in the next provincial election.
- ▶ Over 8 in 10 irregular non-voters say they are likely to vote in the next provincial election, including a remarkable 54% who say they are very likely. About 1 in 10 irregular voters say they are unlikely to vote in the next election.

<b>Vote in next provincial election</b>	<b>Persistent non-voters (n=152)</b>	<b>Irregular non-voters (n=248)</b>
Very likely	16%	54%
Somewhat likely	29%	29%
Unlikely	51%	11%
Don't know	3%	6%

Note: Columns may not sum to 100% due to rounding.  
Differences in results by persistent and irregular non-voters statistically significant (chi-square probability <.001).

### 5.2.4 Encouraging voting

While many persistent non-voters do not think they will vote in future elections, most still support Elections Manitoba specifically encouraging Manitobans to vote.

- ▶ Almost 3 persistent non-voters in 4 at least somewhat support Elections Manitoba in these efforts, including 1 in 3 who strongly support it. It may be that the majority of persistent non-voters would themselves like such encouragement.
- ▶ Almost 9 irregular non-voters in 10 at least somewhat support Elections Manitoba encouraging Manitobans to vote by telling them why their vote matters, why it is important, and what the consequences are if people do not vote. Over half strongly supports such efforts.

	<b>Persistent non-voters (n=152)</b>	<b>Irregular non-voters (n=248)</b>
Strongly support	32%	53%
Somewhat support	40%	34%
Somewhat oppose	11%	6%
Strongly oppose	8%	4%
Don't know/no response	9%	4%

Note: Columns do not sum to 100% due to rounding.  
Differences between voters and non-voters are statistically significant (chi-square probability<.001).

Persistent non-voters are less likely than irregular non-voters to be satisfied with the present electoral system. Still, a majority of persistent non-voters (over 6 in 10) are at least somewhat satisfied. About 3 in 4 irregular non-voters are at least somewhat satisfied.

	Persistent non-voters (n=152)	Irregular non-voters (n=248)
Very satisfied	16%	23%
Somewhat satisfied	46%	54%
Somewhat dissatisfied	15%	13%
Very dissatisfied	13%	9%
Not sure/no response	11%	1%

Note: Columns may not sum to 100% due to rounding.  
Difference between persistent and irregular non-voters is statistically significant (chi-square probability < .001).

About half of persistent (50%) and irregular (53%) non-voters report being more likely or much more likely to vote if Manitoba adopted proportion representation. However, only some are much more likely. Indeed, about 1 in 5 report being less likely to vote under such a system. See Table 35.

	Persistent non-voters (n=152)	Irregular non-voters (n=248)
Much more likely	11%	16%
More likely	39%	37%
No more likely	21%	20%
Less or much less likely	20%	20%
Not sure/no response	9%	7%

The convenience of online voting is attractive to many non-voters. If Elections Manitoba allowed individuals to vote on its website, over half of persistent (54%) and 6 in 10 of irregular (60%) non-voters say they would be more likely to vote. However, about 1 in 6 report that they would be less likely to vote if online voting was allowed. See Table 36.

	Persistent non-voters (n=152)	Irregular non-voters (n=248)
Much more likely	28%	34%
More likely	26%	27%
No more likely	28%	21%
Less likely	16%	17%
Not sure/no response	2%	2%

Note: Columns may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

## **6.0 Conclusion**

This research reinforces what we found in 2007 and 2003: that most Manitobans think that it is very important for people to vote, but that whether they personally vote is less important.

Compared with the previous provincial elections, there was a dramatic drop in the voter turnout in 2003 and the turnout has not increased significantly in the following two elections. In past research, we postulated that the turnout should rebound, depending on the circumstances. There was a slight rebound in turnout (54% to 57%) in 2007, but results were stagnant in 2011 (56%). This is in spite of the fact that the 2011 election met one condition that non-voters say would encourage them to vote: an election where the outcome was difficult to predict. Throughout the election period, media commentary suggested the race was very competitive which, according to this research, should have resulted in a higher turnout. It did not, which possibly speaks to the fact that as eligible voters become disengaged from the electoral process, even close-fought races will not necessarily galvanize the electorate since many are not following media related to the election, and therefore would not know that the race is close.

### **6.1 Profile of non-voters**

As we have found in the past, compared to voters, non-voters are more likely to be younger, have children under 18 years of age in their households, and come from households that do not vote. That being said, there are non-voters in every age cohort and household type. In addition, the non-voters group is not static; a person may not vote in one election but be a voter in the next. Indeed, many non-voters are irregular voters who have voted in the past, but circumstances particular to the last election made voting less of a priority for them.

About 1 in 5 eligible voters are what we might classify as permanent non-voters; that is, those who simply do not vote. This proportion has remained pretty much unchanged for the past three elections. However, even the term persistent non-voter is misleading; although this is the group that is the least likely to vote and see a value in voting, membership is not permanent and many younger non-voters indicate that they will vote in the future. However, they will be replaced, at least for a period of time, by new, young non-voters.

There are several concerns about the composition of the non-voter group in general. As mentioned, a large proportion of the non-voters group is made up of young adults. Other research suggests it is quite normal for young adults to be disproportionately represented in the non-voters segment. Indeed, voting is often seen as having a life-cycle. As people age they take on greater responsibilities and are affected more directly by government policies; they become more engaged in the political process and are more likely to vote. However, it has also been suggested that lack of engagement in the electoral process at an early age can lead to a lifetime of not voting. Non-voting in one election reinforces the decision not to vote in the next. The worry is that the growing number of young adults not voting will result in more of these young adults remaining non-voters throughout their life.

The growth of not voting among young adults may also reflect another sociological phenomenon: what has been called the “adult teenager.” Young adults are taking longer to adopt the responsibilities that used to be associated with adulthood (e.g., a career, marriage, children, or

mortgage). These responsibilities are being delayed until they are in their 30s. It is possible that, like these other adult responsibilities, the responsibility of voting is being delayed until later in life.

This has been stated in earlier reports, and nothing found in the current study leads us to change these perceptions.

## **6.2 The idea of voting**

In general, most Manitobans believe that voting is important, that is, they accept that the concept of voting is intrinsic to our system of government. It is a system that most are satisfied with and believe requires participation of people to work. However, their own vote (that is, the act of casting their vote) is less important. So the challenge is how to engage all eligible Manitobans so they make voting a priority.

As this research shows, the vast majority of Manitobans are predisposed to vote, but for many it is not a priority. Most believe (regardless of whether they voted or not in 2011) that it is very important, or even essential, that people vote. Most also agree that it is the duty of good citizens to vote. And, if asked, most non-voting respondents would likely say that they are good citizens. Although they did not get around to voting, many probably believe their non-voting was an anomaly. In other words, they consider their intention to vote almost as good as the act of voting itself. Likely, the outcomes of elections help reinforce their decisions, as the results would not have changed if they had voted.

## **6.3 Reasons for not voting**

Although most Manitobans continue to think voting is important, it does not necessarily mean they will vote.

There are many factors in decisions not to vote, and non-voters often have more than one reason for not participating. However, it appears that the reasons for not voting generally fall into two broad categories: people are either distracted or disassociated from the election process.

Most non-voters give reasons that suggest that they wanted to vote, but other things distracted them from casting a ballot. They report they did not vote because of a lack of time, an illness, or travel. Many of these reasons are just another way of saying that voting was not a priority, compared to other activities. As a group, these non-voters are more likely to participate in future elections than other non-voters and might be considered irregular voters.

Disassociated non-voters can be further broken down into two subcategories. There are those who are not interested in the process because they feel the issues are too complex to understand, they do not know enough to vote, or they are not interested in the issues. These non-voters may believe it is important to vote, but do not value their own vote for the reasons listed above. These non-voters are more difficult to encourage to vote. Although they have not given up on the system, they simply do not believe that their vote is constructive because they know so little.

The other subcategory of disassociated non-voters includes those who have chosen to disengage from the process because they believe political parties do not represent their views, parties do not address the issues that are important, or more generally, that politicians cannot be trusted. In

short, they are disillusioned with the system. They also believe that the outcome does not affect them directly. This group is the most difficult to get re-engaged in the process, since they are less likely to believe that it is important for anyone to vote. While we have painted these types of non-voters as distinct, as mentioned, non-voters report many different reasons as important in their decision not to vote.

Future research with non-voters faces a number of challenges. Over the course of three provincial elections and three surveys examining voters and non-voters, the willingness of non-voters to admit their behaviour and to participate has been declining. In particular, the youngest age cohort (18 to 29) is difficult to get to participate. This is due to several factors, including that this age group, being more uninterested in the electoral process, are less likely than older age cohorts to be willing to participate in research about that process. This, coupled with the fact that the youngest cohort are not as readily available through traditional methods of contacting the public (i.e., landline telephone), means that, in future research, alternate methodology will need to be considered in order to involve young non-voters in a fulsome way. This might include supplementing a telephone sample with an online survey, but whatever the methodological approach, it will be an important consideration the next time this research is conducted.

In spite of the challenges faced in encouraging participation of non-voters in this survey, the results of this survey appear to be representative of the population of non-voters. Indeed, the findings from this study are very similar to those following the 2007 and 2003 provincial elections, and comparisons over time suggest little has changed.

## Appendix A – Questionnaire

**INITIAL CALL STATUS SCREEN**

Good evening, this is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm calling from Prairie Research Associates, an independent research firm based in Winnipeg. Tonight we are calling on behalf of Elections Manitoba, the independent organization charged with running provincial elections, to get your impression of the process of voting in the province. We are very interested in getting opinions of both people who voted and those who did not in the last provincial election. Would you have time now to do this short survey with me?

YES, CONTINUE WITH SURVEY ..... 02

**SCREENER QUESTIONS**

S1. Before we begin, I just have a few things to confirm with you. Were you eligible to vote in the last Manitoba provincial election, held October 4, 2011?

Yes -- CONTINUE ..... 1  
 No -- TERMINATE ..... 0 => /INT02  
 Don't Know -- TERMINATE ..... 8 => /INT02  
 No Response -- TERMINATE ..... 9 => /INT02

«S1»

2012/01/05 11:24

**SCREENER QUESTIONS**

S2. And just to confirm, you are at least 18 years of age or older?

Yes -- CONTINUE ..... 1  
 No -- TERMINATE ..... 0 => /INT02  
 Don't Know -- TERMINATE ..... 8 => /INT02  
 No Response -- TERMINATE ..... 9 => /INT02

«S2»

---

**SCREENER QUESTIONS**

S3. Have you been living in Manitoba for the past 12 months?

Yes -- CONTINUE ..... 1  
 No -- TERMINATE ..... 0 => /INT02  
 Don't Know -- TERMINATE ..... 8 => /INT02  
 No Response -- TERMINATE ..... 9 => /INT02

«S3»

2012/01/05 13:58

**SCREENER QUESTIONS**

S4. Are you a Canadian citizen?

Yes -- CONTINUE ..... 1 => Q1  
 No -- TERMINATE ..... 0 => /INT02  
 Don't Know -- TERMINATE ..... 8 => /INT02  
 No Response -- TERMINATE ..... 9 => /INT02

«S4»

---

**INT02**

**14:**

**Q1**

2012/01/05 13:58

**SECTION 1: VOTING BEHAVIOUR**

Q1. People have many different reasons for deciding whether to vote or not to vote. During the last provincial election in October 2011, approximately half of eligible voters turned out to vote. In this case, both voting and not voting was common in the last election. Did you choose to vote in the October 2011 provincial election?

Yes.....	1	
No.....	0	
Don't Know - TERMINATE.....	8	=> /INT02
No Response - TERMINATE.....	9	=> /INT02

«Q1»

**15:**

**Q2**

2012/01/05 11:27

**IF Q1 = YES**

Q2. As mentioned, people have different reasons for going out to vote. Why did you vote in the October 2011 provincial election?

=> +1
if NOT Q1=1

Reasons for voting (SPECIFY).....	66	O
Don't Know.....	88	X
No Response.....	99	X

**16:**

**Q3**

2012/01/05 11:29

**IF Q1 = NO**

Q3. As mentioned, people have different reasons for not voting. Why didn't you vote in the October provincial election?

=> Q5
if NOT Q1=0

Reasons for not voting (SPECIFY).....	66	O
Don't Know.....	88	X
No Response.....	99	X

**17:**

**Q4**

2012/01/05 11:21

**IF Q1 = NO**

Q4. What, if anything, would have encouraged you to vote in the recent election?

Incentives (SPECIFY).....	66	O
Don't Know.....	88	X
No Response.....	99	X

**Q5**

2012/01/05 11:27

Q5. Are there other people in your household who were eligible to vote in the October 2011 provincial election?

Yes.....	1	
No.....	0	=> Q7
Don't Know.....	8	=> Q7
No Response.....	9	=> Q7

«Q5»

---

**Q6**

2012/01/05 11:27

*IF Q5 = YES*

Q6. As far as you know, <dumm2 > did all those eligible in your household vote in the October 2011 election?

Yes.....	1
No.....	0
Don't Know.....	8
No Response.....	9

«Q6»

---

**Q7**

2012/01/05 11:21

Q7. Voter turnout has been declining in recent Manitoba elections. In your opinion, why are fewer people voting?

Reasons (SPECIFY).....	66	O
Don't Know.....	88	X
No Response.....	99	X

«Q7\_01»

«Q7\_02»

«Q7\_03»

«Q7\_04»

«Q7\_05»

«O\_Q7»

---

**Q8X**

2012/01/05 11:27

**SECTION 2: REASONS FOR NOT VOTING Q8-Q16 NON-VOTERS ONLY**

Q8X. I'm going to read a list of reasons people sometimes give for not voting. As I read each, please tell me whether the reason was very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not at all important in your decision not to vote in the October 2011 provincial

**Q8**

2012/01/05 11:27

**QUESTIONS Q8-Q16 ROTATED**

Q8. Didn't know where or when to vote. (PROMPT: How important was this factor in your decision not to vote in the election - very important, somewhat important, not very important or not at all important factor in the October 2011 provincial election?)

Very important..... 4  
Somewhat important..... 3  
Not very important..... 2  
Not at all important..... 1  
(DO NOT READ) Don't Know ..... 8  
(DO NOT READ) No Response..... 9

«Q8»

**Q9**

2012/01/05 11:37

Q9. It was too difficult to make a choice among the parties or candidates running in the election. (PROMPT: How important was this factor in your decision not to vote in the election - very important, somewhat important, not very important or not at all important factor in the October 2011 provincial election?)

Very important..... 4  
Somewhat important..... 3  
Not very important..... 2  
Not at all important..... 1  
(DO NOT READ) Don't Know ..... 8  
(DO NOT READ) No Response..... 9

«Q9»

---

**Q11**

2012/01/05 11:27

**QUESTIONS Q8-Q16 ROTATED**

Q11. Out of town. (PROMPT: How important was this factor in your decision not to vote in the election - very important, somewhat important, not very important or not at all important factor in the October 2011 provincial election?)

Very important..... 4  
Somewhat important..... 3  
Not very important..... 2  
Not at all important..... 1  
(DO NOT READ) Don't Know ..... 8  
(DO NOT READ) No Response..... 9

«Q11»

---

**Q12**

2012/01/05 11:27

**QUESTIONS Q8-Q16 ROTATED**

Q12. Too busy. (PROMPT: How important was this factor in your decision not to vote in the election - very important, somewhat important, not very important or not at all important factor in the October 2011 provincial election?)

Very important..... 4  
Somewhat important..... 3  
Not very important..... 2  
Not at all important..... 1  
(DO NOT READ) Don't Know ..... 8  
(DO NOT READ) No Response..... 9

«Q12»

---

**Q13**

2012/01/06 14:31

**QUESTIONS Q8-Q16 ROTATED**

Q13. My vote did not matter since it was clear which party was going to win the provincial election. (PROMPT: How important was this factor in your decision not to vote in the election - very important, somewhat important, not very important or not at all important factor in the October 2011 provincial election?)

Very important..... 4  
Somewhat important..... 3  
Not very important..... 2  
Not at all important..... 1  
(DO NOT READ) Don't Know ..... 8  
(DO NOT READ) No Response..... 9

«Q13»

---

**Q14**

2012/01/06 14:31

**QUESTIONS Q8-Q16 ROTATED**

Q14. My vote did not matter in my electoral division (riding) since it was clear who would win. (PROMPT: How important was this factor in your decision not to vote in the election - very important, somewhat important, not very important or not at all important factor in the October 2011 provincial election?)

Very important..... 4  
Somewhat important..... 3  
Not very important..... 2  
Not at all important..... 1  
(DO NOT READ) Don't Know ..... 8  
(DO NOT READ) No Response..... 9

«Q14»

---

**Q15**

2012/01/05 11:27

*QUESTIONS Q8-Q16 ROTATED*

Q15. Did not know enough about the parties, policies, or candidates to vote. (PROMPT: How important was this factor in your decision not to vote in the election - very important, somewhat important, not very important or not at all important factor in the October 2011 provincial election?)

Very important..... 4  
Somewhat important..... 3  
Not very important..... 2  
Not at all important..... 1  
(DO NOT READ) Don't Know ..... 8  
(DO NOT READ) No Response..... 9

«Q15»

---

**Q16**

2012/01/06 14:32

*QUESTIONS Q8-Q16 ROTATED*

Q16. Could not relate to any of the election issues. (PROMPT: How important was this factor in your decision not to vote in the election - very important, somewhat important, not very important or not at all important factor in the October 2011 provincial election?)

Very important..... 4  
Somewhat important..... 3  
Not very important..... 2  
Not at all important..... 1  
(DO NOT READ) Don't Know ..... 8  
(DO NOT READ) No Response..... 9

«Q16»

---

**Q17**

2012/01/05 11:29

*ALL RESPONDENTS*

Q17. Thinking back to the October provincial election, which of the following best describes when you decided that you would or would not vote...(READ RESPONSES)

As soon as the election was called..... 1  
Soon after the election was called ..... 2  
Part way through the election campaign..... 3  
A few days before election day ..... 4  
On election day..... 5  
(DO NOT READ) Don't Know ..... 8  
(DO NOT READ) No Response..... 9

«Q17»

---

**Q18**

2012/01/05 11:27

Q18. Thinking about the last provincial election in Manitoba, held in October 2011, would you say that you followed the election very closely, somewhat closely, not very closely or not at all closely?

Very closely.....	4
Somewhat closely.....	3
Not very closely.....	2
Not at all closely.....	1
(DO NOT READ) Don't Know.....	8
(DO NOT READ) No Response.....	9

«Q18»

---

**Q19**

2012/01/05 11:37

Q19. Thinking about the various political parties that participated in the election, would you say that you were very knowledgeable, somewhat knowledgeable, not very knowledgeable, or not at all knowledgeable about their policies and election platforms?

Very knowledgeable.....	4
Somewhat knowledgeable.....	3
Not very knowledgeable.....	2
Not at all knowledgeable.....	1
(DO NOT READ) Don't Know.....	8
(DO NOT READ) No Response.....	9

«Q19»

---

**Q20**

2012/01/05 11:21

**SECTION 3: ATTITUDES TOWARD VOTING**

Q20. In your view, how critical is it that people vote in elections? Is it essential, very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not at all important?

Essential.....	5	
Very important.....	4	
Somewhat important.....	3	
Not very important.....	2	=> Q22X
Not at all important.....	1	=> Q22X
(DO NOT READ) Don't Know.....	8	=> Q22X
(DO NOT READ) No Response.....	9	=> Q22X

«Q20»

---

**Q21**

2012/01/05 11:21

*IF Q20 = 3-5*

Q21. Why is it important that people vote?

Reasons (SPECIFY) ..... 66 O  
Don't Know ..... 88 X  
No Response ..... 99 X

«Q21\_01»

«Q21\_02»

«Q21\_03»

«Q21\_04»

«Q21\_05»

«O\_Q21»

---

**Q22X**

2012/01/05 11:21

Q22X. Now I'd like to get your opinion on other statements. Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with each, using a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means you strongly disagree and 10 means you strongly agree. ----> NEXT SCREEN TO CONTINUE

CONTINUE ..... 1 D

«Q22X»

---

**Q23**

rotation -> Q35

2012/01/05 11:21

*QUESTIONS Q23-Q35 ROTATED*

Q23. My vote doesn't really matter in a provincial election. (PROMPT: Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with this statement using a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means you strongly disagree and 10 means you strongly agree.)

0 - Strongly disagree ..... 00  
1 ..... 01  
2 ..... 02  
3 ..... 03  
4 ..... 04  
5 ..... 05  
6 ..... 06  
7 ..... 07  
8 ..... 08  
9 ..... 09  
10 - Strongly agree ..... 10  
Don't Know ..... 88  
No Response ..... 99

«Q23»

**Q24**

2012/01/05 11:21

**QUESTIONS Q23-Q35 ROTATED**

Q24. My vote doesn't really matter in my electoral division (riding). (PROMPT: Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with this statement using a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means you strongly disagree and 10 means you strongly agree.)

0 - Strongly disagree.....	00
1.....	01
2.....	02
3.....	03
4.....	04
5.....	05
6.....	06
7.....	07
8.....	08
9.....	09
10 - Strongly agree .....	10
Don't Know.....	88
No Response.....	99

«Q24»

---

**Q25**

2012/01/05 11:21

**QUESTIONS Q23-Q35 ROTATED**

Q25. There is no political party in Manitoba that I really agree with. (PROMPT: Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with this statement using a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means you strongly disagree and 10 means you strongly agree.)

0 - Strongly disagree.....	00
1.....	01
2.....	02
3.....	03
4.....	04
5.....	05
6.....	06
7.....	07
8.....	08
9.....	09
10 - Strongly agree .....	10
Don't Know.....	88
No Response.....	99

«Q25»

---

**Q26**

2012/01/05 11:21

*QUESTIONS Q23-Q35 ROTATED*

Q26. Most of the issues that governments have to deal with are too complicated for voters to understand. (PROMPT: Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with this statement using a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means you strongly disagree and 10 means you strongly agree.)

0 - Strongly disagree.....	00
1.....	01
2.....	02
3.....	03
4.....	04
5.....	05
6.....	06
7.....	07
8.....	08
9.....	09
10 - Strongly agree .....	10
Don't Know.....	88
No Response.....	99

«Q26»

---

**Q27**

2012/01/05 11:21

*QUESTIONS Q23-Q35 ROTATED*

Q27. None of the political parties in the last provincial election had a plan to address the issues that are important to me. (PROMPT: Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with this statement using a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means you strongly disagree and 10 means you strongly agree.)

0 - Strongly disagree.....	00
1.....	01
2.....	02
3.....	03
4.....	04
5.....	05
6.....	06
7.....	07
8.....	08
9.....	09
10 - Strongly agree .....	10
Don't Know.....	88
No Response.....	99

«Q27»

---

**Q29**

2012/01/05 11:21

**QUESTIONS Q23-Q35 ROTATED**

Q29. Generally, the outcome of provincial elections has no direct effect on me. (PROMPT: Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with this statement using a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means you strongly disagree and 10 means you strongly agree.)

0 - Strongly disagree.....	00
1.....	01
2.....	02
3.....	03
4.....	04
5.....	05
6.....	06
7.....	07
8.....	08
9.....	09
10 - Strongly agree .....	10
Don't Know.....	88
No Response.....	99

«Q29»

---

**Q31**

2012/01/05 11:21

**QUESTIONS Q23-Q35 ROTATED**

Q31. Schools should do more to educate children on the benefits of voting and political participation. (PROMPT: Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with this statement using a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means you strongly disagree and 10 means you strongly agree.)

0 - Strongly disagree.....	00
1.....	01
2.....	02
3.....	03
4.....	04
5.....	05
6.....	06
7.....	07
8.....	08
9.....	09
10 - Strongly agree .....	10
Don't Know.....	88
No Response.....	99

«Q31»

---

**Q32**

2012/01/05 11:21

**QUESTIONS Q23-Q35 ROTATED**

Q32. When people don't vote, it tells us that the system is not working. (PROMPT: Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with this statement using a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means you strongly disagree and 10 means you strongly agree.)

0 - Strongly disagree.....	00
1.....	01
2.....	02
3.....	03
4.....	04
5.....	05
6.....	06
7.....	07
8.....	08
9.....	09
10 - Strongly agree .....	10
Don't Know.....	88
No Response.....	99

«Q32»

---

**Q33**

2012/01/05 11:21

**QUESTIONS Q23-Q35 ROTATED**

Q33. Voting is every Manitoban's duty as a good citizen. (PROMPT: Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with this statement using a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means you strongly disagree and 10 means you strongly agree.)

0 - Strongly disagree.....	00
1.....	01
2.....	02
3.....	03
4.....	04
5.....	05
6.....	06
7.....	07
8.....	08
9.....	09
10 - Strongly agree .....	10
Don't Know.....	88
No Response.....	99

«Q33»

---

**Q34**

2012/01/05 11:22

**QUESTIONS Q23-Q35 ROTATED**

Q34. Parents should instill in their children the importance of voting. (PROMPT: Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with this statement using a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means you strongly disagree and 10 means you strongly agree.)

0 - Strongly disagree.....	00
1.....	01
2.....	02
3.....	03
4.....	04
5.....	05
6.....	06
7.....	07
8.....	08
9.....	09
10 - Strongly agree .....	10
Don't Know.....	88
No Response.....	99

«Q34»

---

**Q35**

2012/01/06 14:32

**QUESTIONS Q23-Q35 ROTATED**

Q35. I am more likely to vote if the election race is close. (PROMPT: Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with this statement using a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means you strongly disagree and 10 means you strongly agree.) (PROMPT: By race we mean the competition between candidates/parties.)

0 - Strongly disagree.....	00
1.....	01
2.....	02
3.....	03
4.....	04
5.....	05
6.....	06
7.....	07
8.....	08
9.....	09
10 - Strongly agree .....	10
Don't Know.....	88
No Response.....	99

«Q35»

---

**Q43**

2012/01/06 14:32

Q43. Elections Manitoba is an independent, non-political agency responsible for running provincial elections. Do you support or oppose Elections Manitoba specifically encouraging Manitobans to vote by telling them why their vote matters, why it is important, and what the consequences are if people do not vote? Do you strongly or somewhat support/oppose it?

Strongly support .....	4
Somewhat support .....	3
Somewhat oppose .....	2
Strongly oppose .....	1
(DO NOT READ) Don't Know .....	8
(DO NOT READ) No Response.....	9

«Q43»

---

**Q44**

2012/01/05 11:22

Q44. As you know, for Manitoba provincial elections, people vote in an electoral division, and the candidate with the most votes wins. In general, how satisfied are you with the present electoral system? Are you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied?

Very satisfied.....	4	=> Q46
Somewhat satisfied .....	3	=> Q46
Somewhat dissatisfied .....	2	
Very dissatisfied .....	1	
(DO NOT READ) Don't Know .....	8	=> Q46
(DO NOT READ) No Response.....	9	=> Q46

«Q44»

---

**Q45**

2012/01/05 11:22

*IF Q44 = SOMEWHAT/VERY DISSATISFIED*

Q45. Does the current method of deciding who wins discourage you from voting?

Yes, very much .....	2
Yes, somewhat.....	1
No .....	0
(DO NOT READ) Don't Know .....	8
(DO NOT READ) No Response.....	9

«Q45»

---

**Q46**

2012/01/05 11:22

Q46. What if we had a different system in which the seats would be divided among the political parties according to the total percentage of votes they get? If this system, known as "proportional representation," was implemented in Manitoba, would you be much more likely, more likely, less likely, or much less likely to vote?

Much more likely .....	4
More likely .....	3
Less likely .....	2
Much less likely .....	1
(DO NOT READ) Would make no difference .....	0
(DO NOT READ) Don't Know .....	8
(DO NOT READ) No Response .....	9

«Q46»

---

**Q47**

2012/01/09 18:06

Q47. Thinking ahead four years from now to the next provincial election, would you be much more likely, more likely, no more likely, or less likely to vote if you could do so online on the Election Manitoba website?

```
=> /+1 ***ERR  
if NOT Q1=0
```

Much more likely .....	4
More likely .....	3
No more likely .....	2
Less likely .....	1
(DO NOT READ) Would make no difference .....	0
(DO NOT READ) Don't Know .....	8
(DO NOT READ) No Response .....	9

«Q47»

---

**Q48**

2012/01/09 18:08

Q48. Thinking ahead four years from now to the next provincial election, if you could vote online on the Elections Manitoba website, would you be very likely, somewhat likely, not very likely, or not at all likely to do so?

```
=> /+1 ***ERR  
if NOT Q1=1
```

Very likely .....	4
Somewhat likely .....	3
Not very likely .....	2
Not at all likely .....	1
(DO NOT READ) Would make no difference .....	0
(DO NOT READ) Don't Know .....	8
(DO NOT READ) No Response .....	9

«Q48»

---

**Q49**

2012/01/05 18:12

Q49. What concerns, if any, would you have about voting online?

Concerns (specify).....	66	O
(DO NOT READ) No concerns.....	00	X
(DO NOT READ) Don't know .....	88	X
(DO NOT READ) No response.....	99	X

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---

**Q58**

2012/01/05 12:15

Q58. Now I'd like you to think back and tell me if you were eligible and did you vote in...  
...The last federal election, that is, in May 2011?

Yes.....	1
No -- Did not vote.....	2
No -- Not eligible.....	3
(DO NOT READ) Don't Know .....	8
(DO NOT READ) No Response.....	9

«Q58»

---

---

**Q57**

2012/01/05 12:15

**SECTION 6: PAST BEHAVIOUR**

Q57. Did you vote in... ..The last civic (municipal) election, that is, in October 2010?

Yes.....	1
No -- Did not vote.....	2
No -- Not eligible.....	3
(DO NOT READ) Don't Know .....	8
(DO NOT READ) No Response.....	9

«Q57»

---

---

**Q59**

2012/01/05 12:16

Q59. Did you vote in... ..The provincial election in May 2007?

Yes.....	1
No -- Did not vote.....	2
No -- Not eligible.....	3
(DO NOT READ) Don't Know .....	8
(DO NOT READ) No Response.....	9

«Q59»

---

---

**Q60**

2012/01/05 11:22

Q60. How likely are you to vote in the next provincial election? Would you say you are very likely, somewhat likely, somewhat unlikely, or very unlikely?

Very likely .....	4
Somewhat likely .....	3
Somewhat unlikely .....	2
Very unlikely .....	1
Don't Know .....	8
No Response .....	9

«Q60»

---

**Q63**

2012/01/06 14:33

**SECTION 7: BACKGROUND QUESTIONS**

Q63. Finally, I would like to ask you some background questions. These help us analyze the information collected. Do you have access to the Internet from home or work?

Yes, from home .....	1
Yes, from work .....	2
Both home and work .....	3
No .....	0
Don't Know .....	8
No Response .....	9

«Q63»

---

**Q64**

2012/01/05 11:22

Q64. How many people live in your household?

\$R 2 20

One person / Just myself .....	01	=> Q66
Don't Know .....	88	
No Response .....	99	

«Q64»

---

**Q65**

2012/01/05 11:22

Q65. How many household members are 18 years of age or older? NUMBER MUST NOT BE GREATER THAN TOTAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN HOUSEHOLD (<Q64 >)

\$R 1 20

Don't Know .....	88
No Response .....	99

«Q65»

---

**Q66**

2012/01/05 11:22

Q66. Were you born in Canada or outside Canada?

In Canada.....	1
Outside Canada.....	2
Don't Know.....	8
No Response.....	9

«Q66»

---

**Q67**

2012/01/05 11:22

Q67. How long have you lived in Manitoba? ENTER NUMBER OF YEARS

\$R 2 100

Less than 6 months.....	000
6 to 12 months.....	001
All my life.....	777
Don't Know.....	888
No Response.....	999

«Q67»

---

**Q68**

2012/01/05 12:48

Q68. In what year were you born?

\$R 1904 1994

Don't Know / No Response.....	8888	=> Q69
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«Q68»

---

**Q69**

2012/01/05 12:49

Q69. What is the highest level of education you completed?

Elementary school (0-8).....	01
Some high school (9-12).....	02
High school grad.....	03
Some community / technical college.....	04
Community / technical college grad.....	05
Some university.....	06
University grad.....	07
(DO NOT READ) Don't Know.....	88
(DO NOT READ) No Response.....	99

«Q69»

---

**Q70**

2012/01/05 11:22

Q70. What are the first three characters of your postal code? (ONLY VALID MANITOBA POSTAL CODES ACCEPTED)

A9A

Don't Know / No Response.....	888
-------------------------------	-----

«Q70»

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**Q71**

2012/01/05 16:29

Q71. I'm going to read some broad income categories. When I read the one that represents your total annual household income, please stop me.

- Under \$35,000 ..... 1
- \$35,000 to \$50,000 ..... 2
- \$50,000 to \$75,000 ..... 3
- \$75,000 to \$100,000 ..... 4
- Over \$100,000 ..... 5
- (DO NOT READ) Don't Know ..... 8
- (DO NOT READ) No Response..... 9

«Q71»

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***RECORD GENDER - DO NOT ASK***

Those are all the questions I have. On behalf of Prairie Research Associates and Elections Manitoba, thank you for your time. I also want to assure you that all your answers will be kept confidential.

Thank you for your time. Have a nice day/evening

**GENDER:**

- Female ..... 1
- Male ..... 2
- Undetermined ..... 3

«GENDR»

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## Appendix B – Three survey comparison

## Introduction

The tables below compare the results from the 2011, 2007 and 2003 surveys of voters and non-voters, which occurred after that year's provincial election.

## Characteristics of voters/non-voters

### Demographics

Table B1: Demographic characteristics of voters/non-voters: 2011, 2007 and 2003						
	Non-voter			Voter		
	2011 (n=400)	2007 (n=400)	2003 (n=402)	2011 (n=403)	2007 (n=400)	2003 (n=410)
<b>Age</b>						
18 to 29	13%	20%	33%	4%	6%	10%
30 to 54	55%	57%	52%	39%	41%	47%
55 and over	32%	23%	16%	57%	53%	43%
<b>Gender</b>						
Female	57%	60%	58%	54%	55%	50%
Male	43%	40%	42%	46%	45%	50%
<b>Q71 Household income</b>						
Under \$35,000	21%	32%	39%	19%	22%	32%
\$35,000 to \$50,000	20%	21%	23%	14%	21%	19%
\$50,000 to \$75,000	22%	21%	23%	28%	24%	24%
Over \$75,000	37%	27%	16%	40%	33%	25%
<b>Education</b>						
Less than high school	19%	21%	20%	12%	15%	20%
High school grad	27%	30%	31%	24%	20%	21%
Some post-secondary	12%	10%	13%	16%	13%	14%
College/University grad	41%	39%	35%	49%	52%	44%
<b>Number of adult members of household size</b>						
One member	23%	27%	24%	25%	22%	23%
Two members	57%	54%	57%	55%	63%	59%
Three or member	20%	19%	18%	20%	15%	18%
<b>Children under 18 in household</b>						
Yes	37%	40%	44%	25%	29%	30%
No	63%	60%	56%	75%	71%	70%
<b>Live in Manitoba</b>						
All their life	61%	62%	67%	60%	61%	64%
Most of their life	11%	12%	8%	16%	11%	14%
Some of their life	28%	27%	25%	24%	27%	22%
<b>Place of birth</b>						
In Canada	89%	87%	92%	90%	89%	92%
Outside Canada	11%	13%	8%	10%	11%	8%

Note: Percentages exclude those who did not know or refused.

### Voting behaviour in past elections

<b>Table B2: Past voting behaviour: 2011, 2007 and 2003</b>						
<i>Now I'd like you to think back and tell me if you were eligible and did you vote in the...</i>						
<i>Q57. Last civic (municipal) election, that is, in October 2010? (2006, 2002)</i>						
<i>Q58. The last federal election, that is, in May 2011? (2006, 2000)</i>						
<i>Q59. The provincial election in May 2007? (2003, 1999)</i>						
	Non-voters			Voters		
	2011 (n=400)	2007 (n=378)	2003 (n=342)	2011 (n=403)	2007 (n=394)	2003 (n=382)
<b>Voted in...</b>						
The last federal election	47%	50%	48%	97%	96%	96%
The previous provincial election	45%	43%	44%	91%	91%	94%
The last municipal election	38%	32%	41%	91%	88%	95%
<b>Number of past three elections voted in</b>						
None	38%	40%	38%	2%	1%	2%
One	19%	19%	21%	3%	4%	3%
Two	20%	21%	19%	10%	16%	13%
All three	24%	21%	23%	85%	79%	82%

### Voting in future elections

<b>Table B3: Likelihood of voting in the next provincial elections: 2011, 2007 and 2003</b>						
<i>Q60. How likely are you to vote in the next provincial general election? Would you say you are very likely, somewhat likely, somewhat unlikely, or very unlikely?</i>						
	Non-voters			Voters		
	2011 (n=400)	2007 (n=400)	2003 (n=402)	2011 (n=403)	2007 (n=400)	2003 (n=410)
Very likely	40%	33%	37%	95%	95%	94%
Somewhat likely	29%	31%	36%	4%	4%	5%
Not likely	26%	30%	22%	1%	1%	1%
Don't know/no response	5%	6%	6%	<1%	2%	-
Total	100%	100%	101%	100%	102%	100%

Note: Columns may not sum to 100% due to rounding

### Other household members' voting behaviour

<b>Table B4: Other people in household: 2011, 2007 and 2003</b>						
<i>Q5. Are there other people in your household who were eligible to vote in the October 2011 (May 2007, June 2003) provincial election?</i>						
<i>Q6. As far as you know, did all those eligible in your household vote in the October 2011 (May 2007, June 2003) election?</i>						
	Non-voters			Voters		
	2011 (n=400)	2007 (n=400)	2003 (n=402)	2011 (n=403)	2007 (n=400)	2003 (n=410)
Eligible to vote	74%	70%	72%	74%	78%	75%
	(n=296)	(n=280)	(n=288)	(n=299)	(n=310)	(n=310)
All eligible members voted	29%	22%	26%	90%	91%	90%

## Reasons for voting/not voting

### Reasons for voting

<b>Table B5: Reasons for voting in last provincial election: 2011, 2007 and 2003 (voters)</b>			
<i>Q2. As mentioned, people have different reasons for choosing to vote. Why did you vote in the October 2011 (May 2007, June 2003) provincial election?</i>			
Reason	Voters		
	2011 (n=403)	2007 (n=400)	2003 (n=410)
<b>Importance of the act of voting</b>			
Duty/You have to vote/Responsibility	29%	24%	23%
Exercise right/privilege/To protect democracy	23%	20%	24%
Voting is important/I wanted to vote/People should vote	10%	7%	7%
<b>Outcome of the process</b>			
To support/oppose a candidate/party	11%	15%	19%
To have a voice/A say in how things are done	11%	13%	14%
No right to complain if we don't vote	10%	11%	14%
Picking government/Government decisions affect everyone	9%	6%	1%
Only way to change things/Only way to make a difference	7%	5%	9%
To let the majority's voice be heard/To find out what Manitobans want	1%	1%	1%
<b>Other reasons</b>			
Always vote	14%	15%	11%
System doesn't work if people don't vote	-	-	1%
Other reasons	4%	1%	2%
Don't know/no particular reason	1%	1%	2%

Note: Respondents could provide more than one answer. Therefore, column may not sum to 100%.

## Explanations for not voting

### Reasons for not voting in 2007/2003

<b>Table B6: Reasons for NOT voting in last provincial election: 2011, 2007 and 2003 (non-voters)</b>			
<i>Q3. As mentioned, people have different reasons for not voting. Why didn't you vote in the October (June, May) provincial election?</i>			
Reasons	Non-voters		
	2011 (n=400)	2007 (n=400)	2003 (n=402)
<b>Distracted</b>			
Didn't have time/Busy/Bad time of year/Had to work	14%	17%	24%
Not at home/Away from home/Out of town	9%	9%	8%
Ill/Sick	6%	5%	3%
Forgot	4%	5%	7%
Other distractions (e.g., family/poor weather)	1%	-	-
<b>Disassociated</b>			
Lack trust of candidates/Didn't like any of the choices	22%	14%	13%
Not interested/Couldn't be bothered/Indifferent	8%	9%	12%
Outcome of election already determined	5%	4%	5%
Doesn't matter who wins/No difference among parties	4%	8%	8%
Dissatisfaction with government/Lack of leadership	2%	1%	1%
My vote doesn't matter/doesn't make a difference	2%	1%	-
Issues are irrelevant, not a major concern	1%	1%	<1%
Too lazy to bother	1%	1%	1%
<b>Displaced</b>			
Wasn't on voters list/Not enumerated can't vote/didn't have ID	4%	2%	1%
Voting location too far away/Far from work/No ride	3%	4%	5%
Didn't know where or when to vote	2%	2%	2%
Voting location closed too early/Wasn't time to vote	1%	1%	3%
Inconvenient due to age/disability	1%	-	-
<b>Other</b>			
Not well informed/No info on parties	11%	7%	10%
Didn't know who to vote for/Didn't know candidates	6%	6%	5%
Have never voted/don't believe in voting	3%	-	-
Religious objections	2%	3%	3%
Other	7%	4%	2%
Don't know/no particular reason	2%	4%	4%

Note: Respondents could provide more than one answer. Therefore, column may not sum to 100%.

### Importance of factors in decision not to vote

<b>Table B7: Very important reasons for not voting: 2011, 2007 and 2003 (non-voters)</b>			
<i>Q8, 11-16. I'm going to read a list of reasons people sometimes give for not voting. As I read each, please tell me whether the reason was very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not at all important in your decision not to vote in the October 2011 (May 2007, June 2003) provincial election.</i>			
	<b>Very important</b>		
	<b>2011 (n=400)</b>	<b>2007 (n=400)</b>	<b>2003 (n=402)</b>
Did not know enough about the parties, policies, or candidates to vote	29%	32%	30%
My vote didn't matter in my electoral division since it was clear who would win	22%	20%	19%
Too busy	21%	26%	28%
My vote didn't matter since it was clear which party was going to win the provincial elections	20%	21%	16%
Couldn't relate to any of the election issues	17%	22%	15%
Out of town	15%	15%	15%
Did not know where/when to vote	13%	15%	12%

## Reasons for decline in voter turnout

<b>Table B8: Impressions of why voter turnout is declining: 2011, 2007 and 2003 (non-voters)</b>			
<i>Q7. Voter turnout has been declining in recent Manitoba elections. In your opinion, why are fewer people voting?</i>			
	<b>Non-voters</b>		
	<b>2011 (n=400)</b>	<b>2007 (n=400)</b>	<b>2003 (n=402)</b>
<b>Disassociated</b>			
Disillusioned with the process/politicians/elections*	24%	5%	-
Doesn't matter who wins/No difference between parties	23%	22%	30%
Not interested/Don't care/Couldn't be bothered	12%	14%	17%
Lack trust of candidate/Didn't like any of the choices	11%	12%	11%
Issues are irrelevant/not major concerns, negative advertising	5%	5%	3%
Dissatisfaction with government/Lack of leadership	4%	4%	5%
Youth disassociated with voting	4%	4%	3%
Outcome of election already determined/Vote doesn't matter	3%	3%	13%
People don't know who to vote for	-	-	-
<b>Distracted</b>			
Don't have time/Too busy	5%	6%	6%
Not well informed/No information on parties	5%	4%	4%
People are lazy/stupid	3%	2%	2%
Don't know who to vote for/Don't know candidates	2%	4%	3%
People take democracy for granted	2%	1%	2%
Not at home/Away from home/Out of town	-	1%	<1%
<b>Displaced</b>			
Process old fashioned (should be online)	1%	-	-
Voting location too far away	<1%	2%	2%
Didn't know where/when to vote	<1%	1%	1%
Inconvenient due to age/disability	<1%	-	-
Not on voters list/Not enumerated	<1%	-	-
Voting location closed too early/Wasn't time to vote	-	<1%	<1%
<b>Other</b>			
Other	4%	3%	5%
Don't know/no response	19%	20%	13%
* Prior to 2011, this category was labelled "Disillusioned with the process/too many election/too often". It now includes disillusionment with politicians which was stated by 17% of non-voters. Note: Respondents could provide more than one answer. Therefore, columns may not sum to 100%.			

<b>Table B9: Impressions of why voter turnout is declining: 2011, 2007 and 2003 (voters)</b>			
<i>Q7. Voter turnout has been declining in recent Manitoba elections. In your opinion, why are fewer people voting?</i>			
	<b>Voters</b>		
	<b>2011 (n=403)</b>	<b>2007 (n=400)</b>	<b>2003 (n=410)</b>
<b>Disassociated</b>			
Not interested/Don't care/Couldn't be bothered	26%	27%	24%
Doesn't matter who wins/No difference between parties	24%	15%	29%
Disillusioned with the process/politicians/elections*	15%	1%	-
Lack trust of candidate/Didn't like any of the choices	8%	11%	14%
Youth disassociated with voting	7%	7%	5%
Issues are irrelevant/not major concerns, negative advertising	5%	2%	3%
Outcome of election already determined/Vote doesn't matter	3%	4%	15%
Dissatisfaction with government/Lack of leadership	4%	4%	2%
<b>Distractions</b>			
Not well informed/No information on parties	7%	4%	4%
People take democracy for granted	9%	3%	3%
Don't have time/Too busy	5%	7%	8%
People are lazy/stupid	5%	5%	3%
Don't know who to vote for/Don't know candidates	1%	3%	2%
Not at home/Away from home/Out of town	-	-	<1%
<b>Displaced</b>			
Voting location too far away	1%	3%	1%
Not on voters list/Not enumerated	1%	<1%	<1%
Inconvenient due to age/disability	1%		
Didn't know where/when to vote	<1%	<1%	1%
Process old fashioned (should be online)	<1%		
People being ill	<1%		
Voting location closed too early/Wasn't time to vote	-	-	-
<b>Other</b>			
Other	5%	3%	2%
Don't know/no particular reason	12%	13%	12%
* Prior to 2011, this category was labelled "Disillusioned with the process/too many election/too often". It now includes disillusionment with politicians which was stated by 9% of voters.			
Note: Respondents could provide more than one answer. Therefore, columns may not sum to 100%.			

## Timing of decision to vote/not vote

<b>Table B10: Timing of decision to vote/not vote: 2011, 2007 and 2003</b>						
<i>Q17. Thinking back to the October provincial election, which of the following best describes when you decided that you would or would not vote?</i>						
	Non-voters			Voters		
	2011 (n=400)	2007 (n=400)	2003 (n=402)	2011 (n=403)	2007 (n=400)	2003 (n=410)
On election day	27%	33%	35%	2%	5%	5%
During the election campaign	41%	36%	37%	18%	24%	20%
As soon as the election was called	26%	23%	23%	79%	70%	75%
Don't remember	6%	9%	5%	<1%	2%	-
Total	100%	100%	100%	99%	101%	100%

Note: Columns may not sum to 100% due to rounding

## Knowledge of election

<b>Table B11: Knowledge of election: 2011, 2007 and 2003</b>						
<i>Q18. Thinking about the last provincial election in Manitoba, held in October 2011 (May 2007, June 2003), would you say that you followed the election very closely, somewhat closely, not very closely or not at all closely?</i>						
<i>Q19. Thinking about the various political parties that participated in the election, would you say that you were very knowledgeable, somewhat knowledgeable, not very knowledgeable, or not at all knowledgeable about their policies and election platforms?</i>						
	Non-Voters			Voters		
	2011 (n=400)	2007 (n=400)	2003 (n=402)	2011 (n=403)	2007 (n=400)	2003 (n=410)
<b>Follow election</b>						
Very closely	15%	11%	6%	27%	25%	22%
Somewhat closely	37%	33%	37%	60%	60%	65%
Not very closely	23%	24%	30%	10%	12%	10%
Not at all closely	25%	33%	27%	3%	3%	3%
<b>Knowledge of the policies and platforms</b>						
Very knowledgeable	14%	10%	10%	26%	21%	19%
Somewhat knowledgeable	47%	45%	45%	67%	69%	69%
Not very knowledgeable	19%	25%	27%	6%	8%	11%
Not at all knowledgeable	19%	19%	17%	1%	1%	2%

Note: Non responses are included in the calculations but not shown. Columns may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

## Motivators to vote or not vote

## Importance of voting

<b>Table B12: Importance of people voting in election: 2011, 2007 and 2003</b>						
<i>Q20. In your view, how critical is it that people vote in elections? Is it essential, very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not at all important?</i>						
	Non-voters			Voters		
	2011 (n=400)	2007 (n=400)	2003 (n=402)	2011 (n=403)	2007 (n=400)	2003 (n=410)
Essential/very important	64%	60%	65%	95%	93%	92%
Somewhat important	25%	26%	25%	4%	5%	7%
Not important	9%	12%	8%	1%	1%	1%

Note: Non-responses are included in the calculations but not shown. Columns do not sum to 100%.

<b>Table B13: Reason why it is important to vote: 2011, 2007 and 2003</b>						
<i>Q21. Why is it important that people vote?</i>						
Reasons	Non-voters			Voters		
	2011 (n=358)	2007 (n=344)	2003 (n=363)	2011 (n=398)	2007 (n=391)	2003 (n=405)
<b>Affect outcome</b>						
To let the majority's voice be heard	18%	12%	10%	15%	14%	13%
To have a voice/A say in how things are done	17%	22%	27%	20%	21%	24%
Only way to change things/Only way to make a difference	12%	10%	10%	14%	10%	12%
Choosing a government/Government decisions affect everyone	12%	11%	6%	11%	7%	4%
No right to complain if we don't vote	10%	7%	9%	17%	18%	21%
To support/oppose a candidate/party	8%	14%	9%	4%	7%	10%
<b>Importance of the act of voting</b>						
Exercise right/privilege/To protect democracy	17%	12%	15%	27%	23%	22%
System doesn't work if people don't vote	7%	4%	9%	7%	5%	9%
Voting is important/People should vote	3%	3%	2%	4%	2%	1%
Duty or responsibility to vote	2%	2%	4%	7%	6%	7%
<b>Other reasons</b>						
Don't know/no particular reason	5%	5%	6%	3%	1%	1%
	6%	7%	7%	1%	2%	1%

Note: Respondents could provide more than one answer. Therefore, columns may not sum to 100%.

### Attitudes towards voting

<b>Table B14: Attitudes toward voting process: 2011, 2007 and 2003</b> Q23-27, 29, 31-35. Now I'd like to get your opinion on other statements. Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with each, using a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means you strongly disagree and 10 means you strongly agree.						
Statement	Strongly agree (8 to 10)					
	Non-voters			Voters		
	2011 (n=400)	2007 (n=400)	2003 (n=402)	2011 (n=403)	2007 (n=400)	2003 (n=410)
<b>Attitudes toward voting process</b>						
When people don't vote, it tells us that the system is not working.	46%	53%	51%	37%	40%	36%
Voting is every Manitoban's duty as a good citizen.	51%	50%	46%	84%	86%	82%
<b>Attitudes toward political process/issues</b>						
There is no political party in Manitoba that I really agree with.	27%	30%	27%	13%	10%	11%
None of the political parties in the last provincial election had a plan to address the issues that are important to me.	27%	24%	29%	16%	11%	14%
Most of the issues that governments have to deal with are too complicated for voters to understand.	16%	17%	18%	10%	7%	9%
<b>Attitudes toward voting</b>						
I'm more likely to vote if the election race is close.	31%	32%	27%	27%	22%	27%
Generally, the outcome of provincial elections has no direct effect on me.	23%	23%	21%	10%	10%	9%
My vote doesn't really matter in my electoral division (riding).	26%	21%	19%	13%	11%	9%
My vote doesn't really matter in a provincial election.	21%	21%	14%	13%	8%	8%
<b>Attitudes toward encouraging voting</b>						
Schools should do more to educate children on the benefits of voting and political participation.	54%	52%	52%	67%	66%	66%
Parents should instil in their children the importance of voting.	57%	51%	50%	88%	87%	85%

### Role of Elections Manitoba

<b>Table B16: Encouraging Manitobans to vote</b> Q43. Elections Manitoba is an independent, non-political agency responsible for running provincial elections. Would you support or oppose Elections Manitoba specifically encouraging Manitobans to vote by telling them why their vote matters, why it is important, and what the consequences are if people do not vote?						
	Non-voters			Voters		
	2011 (n=400)	2007 (n=400)	2003 (n=402)	2011 (n=403)	2007 (n=400)	2003 (n=410)
Strongly support	45%	39%	38%	68%	68%	53%
Somewhat support	36%	37%	43%	25%	26%	37%
Somewhat oppose	8%	10%	10%	3%	2%	4%
Strongly oppose	5%	10%	7%	2%	2%	4%
Don't know	6%	4%	4%	2%	3%	2%
Total	100%	101%	101%	100%	101%	100%

Note: Note: Columns may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

## Encourage respondents to vote

<b>Table B17: Encourage respondents to vote: 2011, 2007 and 2003 (voters)</b>			
<i>Q4. What, if anything, would have encouraged you to vote in the recent election?</i>			
	<b>Voters</b>		
	<b>2011 (n=400)</b>	<b>2007 (n=400)</b>	<b>2003 (n=410)</b>
<b>Disassociated</b>			
Having greater trust/confidence in candidates	21%	18%	18%
Nothing would encourage them to vote	11%	16%	19%
If there were important issues/Addressing issues of interest	8%	7%	7%
If outcome wasn't already determined	4%	4%	3%
Feeling more valued/civic minded	4%	-	-
<b>Distracted</b>			
More informed about candidates/issues	8%	8%	9%
<b>Displaced</b>			
Election on a more convenient day/On a different day	7%	7%	7%
Voting locations more easily accessible	5%	4%	6%
More informed about when/where election was	3%	4%	5%
Alternate ways to vote (Internet, phone, mail)	2%	<1%	2%
Advanced voting easier to access	2%	<1%	1%
Voting locations open earlier/later/longer	<1%	2%	3%
<b>Other</b>			
Usually do vote/If had been well enough to vote	5%	4%	-
Other	4%	5%	6%
Don't know	22%	24%	20%

Note: Respondents could provide more than one answer. Therefore, column may not sum to 100%.

## Satisfaction with current system

<b>Table B16: Satisfaction with current electoral system: 2011, 2007 and 2003</b>						
<i>Q44. As you know, for Manitoba provincial elections, people vote in an electoral division, and the candidate with the most votes wins. In general, how satisfied are you with the present electoral system? Are you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied?</i>						
<i>Q45. Does the current method of deciding who wins discourage you from voting?</i>						
	<b>Non-voters</b>			<b>Voters</b>		
	<b>2011 (n=400)</b>	<b>2007 (n=400)</b>	<b>2003 (n=402)</b>	<b>2011 (n=403)</b>	<b>2007 (n=400)</b>	<b>2003 (n=410)</b>
<b>Satisfaction</b>						
Very satisfied	20%	17%	17%	37%	31%	30%
Somewhat satisfied	51%	53%	57%	47%	56%	57%
Somewhat dissatisfied	14%	14%	13%	11%	10%	8%
Very dissatisfied	11%	11%	8%	3%	2%	3%
Not sure	5%	6%	6%	2%	2%	2%
<b>Discourage you from voting</b>						
Yes, very much	5%	8%	4%	1%	1%	<1%
Yes, somewhat	6%	5%	5%	4%	2%	2%

Note: Columns may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

## Proportional representation

**Table 37: Impact of proportional representation: 2011, 2007 and 2003**

*Q46. What if we had a different system in which the seats would be divided among the political parties according to the total percentage of votes they get? If this system, known as "proportional representation," was implemented in Manitoba, would you be much more likely, more likely, less likely, or much less likely to vote?*

	Non-voters			Voters		
	2011 (n=400)	2007 (n=400)	2003 (n=402)	2011 (n=403)	2007 (n=400)	2003 (n=410)
Much more likely	14%	11%	13%	11%	12%	11%
More likely	38%	40%	44%	26%	26%	28%
Makes no difference	21%	22%	15%	41%	39%	34%
Less likely	12%	11%	17%	10%	11%	16%
Much less likely	8%	6%	4%	5%	3%	4%
Don't know	8%	10%	7%	7%	10%	7%
Total	101%	100%	100%	100%	101%	100%

Note: Columns may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

## Appendix C – Call record

<b>Call record Elections Manitoba</b>		
<b>Outcome</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
A Total numbers attempted	29,352	100%
1. Not in service	5,264	18%
2. Fax	433	1%
3. Business	206	<1%
Remaining	23,449	80%
B Total eligible numbers	23,449	100%
4. Busy	332	1%
5. Answering machines	4,070	17%
6. No answer	3,280	14%
7/8. Language/illness/incapability	811	3%
9. Selected/eligible respondent not available	676	3%
Remaining	14,280	61%
C Total asked	14,280	100%
10. Household refusal	1,543	11%
11. Respondent refusal	5,023	35%
12. Qualified respondent break off	44	<1%
Remaining	7,670	54%
D Co-operative contacts	7,670	100%
13. Disqualified	6,867	90%
14. Completed interviews	803	10%
Refusal rate = (10+11+12)/C	6,604	46%
Response rate (D/B)	7,670	33%