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15 – 31 Pelham Street
Carlton
Victoria 3053
Phone 03 9929 9903
Mobile 0416 121 969

With data supplied by



About the Poll

This report summarises the results of a weekly omnibus conducted by Essential Research with data provided by Your Source. The survey was conducted online from the 1st to 4th February and is based on 1,053 respondents.

Aside from the standard question on voting intention, this week's report includes questions on the announcement of the next election date, the budget surplus, cost of living and government regulation.

The methodology used to carry out this research is described in the appendix on page 11.

Note that due to rounding, not all tables necessarily total 100% and subtotals may also vary.

Federal politics – voting intention

Q. If a Federal Election was held today to which party will you probably give your first preference vote? If not sure, which party are you currently leaning toward?

Q. If don't know -Well which party are you currently leaning to?

Sample size = 1,928 respondents

First preference/leaning to	Election 21 Aug 10	2 weeks ago 21/1/13	Last week 29/01/13	This week 5/02/13
Liberal		44%	44%	45%
National		4%	3%	3%
Total Lib/Nat	43.6%	48%	48%	48%
Labor	38.0%	36%	35%	34%
Greens	11.8%	9%	10%	10%
Other/Independent	6.6%	8%	7%	8%

2PP	Election 21 Aug 10	2 weeks ago	Last week	This week
Total Lib/Nat	49.9%	54%	54%	54%
Labor	50.1%	46%	46%	46%

NB. The data in the above tables comprise 2-week averages derived from the first preference/leaning to voting questions. Respondents who select 'don't know' are not included in the results. The two-party preferred estimate is calculated by distributing the votes of the other parties according to their preferences at the 2010 election. These estimates have a confidence interval of approx. plus or minus 2-3%.

Election Date Announcement

Q. The Prime Minister Julia Gillard has announced the Federal Election will be held on September 14 this year. Do you approve or disapprove of the election date being announced nearly 8 months in advance?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens
Total approve	48%	73%	35%	45%
Total disapprove	34%	13%	50%	35%
Strongly approve	15%	24%	10%	16%
Approve	33%	49%	25%	29%
Disapprove	19%	10%	25%	26%
Strongly disapprove	15%	3%	25%	9%
Don't know	19%	14%	16%	20%

48% approve of the announcement of the next Federal election date and 34% disapprove. 73% of Labor voters approve compared to 45% of Greens voters and 35% of Liberal/National voters. 50% of Liberal/National voters disapprove.

There were no major differences by demographics - although men were a little more likely to approve (53%) and women a little more likely to disapprove (38%).

Budget Surplus

Q. Thinking about the Federal Government budget, how important do you believe it is for the budget to be in surplus...?

	Total important	Total not important	Very important	Quite Important	Not very important	Not at all important	Don't know		Total important 2 Oct 12
...for the country as a whole	69%	26%	28%	41%	22%	4%	5%		68%
...for you personally	54%	39%	20%	34%	29%	10%	7%		46%

A clear majority of respondents (69%) regard having a Federal Government budget surplus to be important for the country as a whole, whereas a somewhat smaller majority regard it to be important for them personally (54%).

39% of respondents believe having a Federal Government budget surplus was not important for them personally.

Since this question was last asked in October, those who think a budget surplus is important for them personally has increased from 46% to 54%.

Those most likely to think a budget surplus is important to them personally were Liberal/National voters (67%) and full-time workers (60%).

Approval of Budget Surplus

Q. Do you approve or disapprove of the Government's decision not to return the budget to surplus this financial year?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens
Total approve	42%	64%	29%	55%
Total disapprove	37%	12%	57%	25%
Strongly approve	9%	18%	5%	8%
Approve	33%	46%	24%	47%
Disapprove	27%	11%	39%	22%
Strongly disapprove	10%	1%	18%	3%
Don't know	21%	23%	14%	20%

42% approve of the Government's decision not to return the budget to surplus this financial year and 37% disapprove.

Those most likely to approve were Labor voters (64%), Greens voters (55%), men (51%), aged 55+ (50%) and people on incomes under \$600pw (50%).

57% of Liberal/National voters disapprove.

Will the Coalition Deliver a Surplus

Q. Do you think that if Tony Abbott and Coalition win the next election, they will deliver a budget surplus in their first year of Government?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens
Probably will deliver a surplus	19%	10%	31%	14%
Probably won't deliver a surplus	60%	74%	52%	66%
Don't know	20%	16%	18%	20%

60% think that if Tony Abbott and Coalition win the next election, they probably won't deliver a budget surplus in their first year of Government and 19% think they probably will.

A majority of all demographic and voter groups (including Liberal/National voters) think the Coalition will probably not deliver a surplus in their first year if elected.

Changes in Cost of Living

Q. Compared to two or three years ago is your household paying more or less for the following -

	Paying a lot more	Paying a little more	Paying about the same	Paying a little less	Paying a lot less	Don't know	Paying a lot more		
							Own home outright	Own home with mortgage	Renting
Petrol	50%	33%	11%	2%	1%	4%	44%	49%	55%
Fresh food - fruit, vegetables, meat	36%	43%	16%	4%	*	2%	33%	35%	41%
Packaged food	28%	39%	24%	4%	*	4%	26%	27%	33%
Electricity and gas	70%	22%	4%	1%	1%	2%	69%	73%	71%
Housing - mortgage or rent	24%	22%	29%	10%	3%	12%	10%	21%	40%
Insurance	43%	36%	14%	1%	1%	5%	48%	47%	35%
Water	47%	32%	14%	1%	1%	6%	48%	54%	38%
Clothing	21%	30%	37%	9%	1%	2%	17%	21%	25%
Education	24%	20%	27%	3%	3%	23%	15%	28%	26%
Medical, dental	33%	33%	27%	2%	*	3%	33%	35%	34%

Items which respondents said they were “paying a lot more” for were electricity and gas (70%), petrol (50%), water (47%) and insurance (43%).

Homeowners had similar responses to the total sample, but the main things renters were paying a lot more for were electricity and gas (71%), petrol (55%), fresh food (41%) and housing (40%).

Government Regulation

Q. Do you approve or disapprove of Governments making laws to regulate the following?

	Total approve	Total disapprove	Strongly approve	Approve	Disapprove	Strongly disapprove	Don't know	Total approve 30 Apr 12
Wearing seatbelts in cars	97%	2%	77%	20%	2%	*	1%	97%
Wearing bike helmets	92%	6%	68%	24%	5%	1%	2%	94%
Personal use of recreational drugs	64%	27%	34%	30%	12%	15%	10%	59%
Smoking in public places	72%	25%	46%	26%	13%	12%	3%	67%
Buying and consuming alcohol	73%	21%	31%	42%	15%	6%	5%	69%
Shopping hours	56%	35%	17%	39%	25%	10%	9%	56%
Cigarette packaging	67%	27%	40%	27%	14%	13%	6%	64%
Junk food advertising	71%	24%	31%	40%	16%	8%	4%	66%
Gambling, poker machines	73%	23%	40%	33%	13%	10%	4%	na
Films (i.e. censorship)	61%	31%	20%	41%	21%	10%	8%	62%
The internet	53%	38%	18%	35%	22%	16%	8%	49%
Making public statements which other people might find offensive	41%	44%	13%	28%	26%	18%	15%	na

For each of the areas listed above more than half of respondents approved of Governments making laws to regulate the area - with the exception of “making public statements which other people might find offensive” (41% approve/44% disapprove).

The highest levels of approval were for wearing seatbelts in cars (97%) and wearing bike helmets (92%). The highest levels of disapproval were for making public statements which other people might find offensive (44%), the internet (38%) and shopping hours (35%).

Since this question was asked in April last year approval of regulation has increased for personal use of recreational drugs (+5%), smoking in public places (+5%) and junk food advertising (+5%).

Most Important Factor in Government Regulation

Q. What should be the most important factor Governments consider in relation to regulating each of these issues - protecting rights and freedom, protecting people's health and safety or managing the cost to taxpayers (e.g. health costs of drug/alcohol/tobacco use)?

	Protecting rights and freedom	Protecting people's health and safety	Managing the cost to taxpayers	Don't know
Wearing seatbelts in cars	5%	89%	3%	3%
Wearing bike helmets	6%	88%	3%	3%
Personal use of recreational drugs	14%	64%	13%	10%
Smoking in public places	16%	70%	8%	6%
Buying and consuming alcohol	18%	64%	11%	7%
Shopping hours	48%	13%	16%	23%
Cigarette packaging	15%	65%	10%	10%
Junk food advertising	13%	70%	8%	9%
Gambling, poker machines	22%	46%	20%	12%
Films (i.e. censorship)	51%	21%	8%	19%
The internet	56%	21%	7%	16%
Making public statements which other people might find offensive	54%	18%	5%	23%

For most of the areas listed above, the majority of respondents thought the most important factor for Governments to consider was 'protecting people's health and safety'.

The areas where respondents thought that it was more important to consider 'protecting rights and freedoms' were the internet (56%), making statements which other people might find offensive (54%), films (51%) and shopping hours (48%). 'Managing the cost to tax payers' was not considered to be an important factor by most respondents.

Appendix – Methodology

The data gathered for this report is gathered from a weekly online omnibus conducted by Your Source. Your Source is an Australian social and market research company specializing in recruitment, field research, data gathering and data analysis. Your Source holds Interviewer Quality Control Australia (IQCA) accreditation, Association Market and Social Research Organisations (AMSRO) membership and World Association of Opinion and Marketing Research Professionals (ESOMAR) membership. Senior Your Source staff hold Australian Market and Social Research Society (AMSRS) membership and are bound by professional codes of behavior.

Essential Research has been utilizing the Your Source online panel to conduct research on a week by week basis since November 2007. Each Monday, the team at Essential Media Communications discusses issues that are topical. From there a series of questions are devised to put to the Australian public. Some questions are repeated each week (such as political preference and social perspective), while others are unique to each week and reflect prominent media and social issues that are present at the time.

Your Source has a self-managed consumer online panel of over 100,000 members. The majority of panel members have been recruited using off line methodologies, effectively ruling out concerns associated with online self-selection. Your Source has validation methods in place that prevent panelist over use and ensure member authenticity. Your Source randomly selects 18+ males and females (with the aim of targeting 50/50 males/females) from its Australia wide panel. An invitation is sent out to approximately 7000 – 8000 of their panel members. The response rate varies each week, but usually delivers 1000+ responses. The Your Source online omnibus is live from the Wednesday night of each week and closed on the following Sunday. Incentives are offered to participants in the form of points.

EMC uses the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software to analyse the data. The data is weighted against Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data.

