

The Essential Report

4 February 2014





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Date: 4 February 2014

Prepared by: Essential Research

Data supplied:



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Our researchers are members of
the Australian Market and Social Research Society

About this 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 30th January to 3rd February 2014 and is based on 1,051 respondents.

Aside from the standard question on voting intention, this week's report includes questions the appointment of the Governor General, trade unions, paid parental leave and forms of intolerance.

The methodology used to carry out this research is described in the appendix on page 12.

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 = 1,885 respondents

First preference/leaning to	Election 7 Sep 13	2 weeks ago 21/1/14	Last week 28/1/14	This week 4/2/14
Liberal		40%	40%	40%
National		3%	3%	3%
Total Lib/Nat	45.6%	43%	42%	43%
Labor	33.4%	37%	36%	38%
Greens	8.6%	9%	9%	8%
Palmer United Party	5.5%	4%	4%	3%
Other/Independent	6.9%	7%	9%	7%

2 Party Preferred	Election 7 Sep 13	2 weeks ago 21/1/14	Last week 28/1/14	This week 4/2/14
Liberal National	53.5%	51%	50%	50%
Labor	46.5%	49%	50%	50%

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 2013 election.

Peter Cosgrove as Governor General

Q. What do you think of the choice of Peter Cosgrove, former chief of the Defence Forces, as Australia's next Governor General?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other
An excellent choice, the best person for the job	30%	24%	46%	7%	26%
A good choice, one of the best people for the job	34%	34%	36%	29%	41%
An acceptable choice but would prefer someone else	11%	15%	7%	21%	9%
Not a good choice, it should have gone to someone else	4%	3%	1%	15%	4%
Don't know	21%	24%	10%	27%	21%

64% think that the choice of Peter Cosgrove as Australia's next Governor General is good/excellent and that he is the best or one of the best for the job. Only 15% said they would prefer someone else.

Strongest support for the choice of Peter Cosgrove came from Liberal/National voters (82% good/excellent) and those aged 55+ (79%).

36% of Greens voters thought he was a good/excellent choice and 36% would prefer someone else.

Of those aged under 35, 45% thought he was a good/excellent choice, 20% would prefer someone else and 35% did not know.

Appointment of Governor General

Q. Do you think the Governor General should be appointed by the Government or elected by the people of Australia?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other
Appointed by the Government	43%	40%	58%	25%	36%
Elected by the people	40%	45%	29%	58%	55%
Don't know	17%	15%	12%	17%	9%

43% think the Governor General should be appointed by the Government and 40% think the Governor General should be elected by the people of Australia.

Those most in favour of appointment by the Government were Liberal/National voters (58%), aged 55+ (58%) and those with university education (48%).

Those most in favour of election by the people were Greens voters (58%) and other voters (55%).

Importance of unions

Q. How important are unions for Australian working people today?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other	Work full time	Work part time	19 Mar 12	10 Sep 12	20 May 13	10 Dec 13
Total important	61%	79%	44%	87%	60%	60%	72%	56%	52%	56%	57%
Total not Important	30%	17%	50%	8%	27%	34%	21%	35%	38%	36%	34%
Very important	27%	42%	11%	48%	25%	26%	31%	19%	16%	21%	22%
Quite important	34%	37%	33%	39%	35%	34%	41%	37%	36%	35%	35%
Not very important	21%	14%	33%	8%	18%	24%	14%	27%	28%	24%	22%
Not at all important	9%	3%	17%	-	9%	10%	7%	8%	10%	12%	12%
Don't know	8%	5%	5%	5%	13%	5%	7%	9%	10%	8%	9%

The majority of respondents regarded unions to be important for Australian working people today (61%), whilst 30% believe that they were not important. These results represent an increase in importance of unions since this question was asked in December - from net +23 to +31.

79% of Labor voters and 87% of Greens voters believed that unions were important for Australian working people today, while Coalition voters were the most likely to regard unions as not important (50%).

The majority of full time workers (60% - up 5%) and part time workers (72% - up 7%) regarded unions as important for Australian working people today.

Better or worse off with stronger unions

Q. Overall, would workers be better off or worse off if unions in Australia were stronger?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other	Work full time	Work part time	10 Sep 12	20 May 13
Total better off	45%	65%	25%	65%	45%	45%	47%	39%	43%
Total worse off	27%	13%	46%	6%	25%	28%	24%	30%	29%
A lot better off	21%	32%	9%	31%	20%	21%	22%	13%	14%
A little better off	24%	33%	16%	34%	25%	24%	25%	26%	29%
A little worse off	11%	6%	17%	2%	7%	10%	11%	15%	14%
A lot worse off	16%	7%	29%	4%	18%	18%	13%	15%	15%
Make no difference	13%	11%	17%	10%	14%	16%	12%	15%	12%
Don't know	15%	11%	12%	18%	16%	11%	18%	15%	14%

The perception that workers would be better off with stronger unions has increased a little since this question was asked in May last year. 45% (up 2%) felt that workers would be better off if unions in Australia were stronger and 27% (down 2%) that believed workers would be worse off.

By voting intention, 65% of Labor voters and 65% of Greens voters believed that workers would be better off while Coalition voters were by far the most likely to believe that workers would be worse off (46%).

Paid parental leave

Q. The Liberal Government plans to introduce a new parental leave policy which gives new parents up to 26 weeks leave at their current full rate of pay (up to \$150,000) to be partly paid for by a 1.5 per cent levy on large companies. The current policy introduced by the previous Labor Government gives new parents 18 weeks leave at the minimum wage rate paid for by the Government. Which scheme do you support most?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other	Aug 13
The Government's new policy	23%	19%	28%	21%	26%	24%
The current policy	36%	49%	26%	46%	38%	35%
Neither	32%	24%	41%	24%	29%	28%
Don't know	9%	8%	6%	9%	7%	13%

36% support the previous Labor Government's paid parental leave policy and 23% support the Coalition Government's policy more. 32% support neither scheme.

The current scheme is supported by both men (38% to 24%) and women (34% to 22%).

By age group, those aged 18-34 support the Coalition Government's scheme 36% to 35% while aged 35-54 support the current scheme 36% to 20% and those aged 55+ support the current scheme 38% to 11%.

The change of Government has had little impact on opinions on this issue - results are almost exactly the same as when this question was asked in August.

Forms of intolerance

Q. For each of the following forms of intolerance, please indicate to what extent you think it is a problem in Australia.

	Total large/moderate	A large problem	Moderate problem	Small problem	Not a problem at all	Don't know	Sept 12 Total large/moderate	Jun 13 Total large/moderate
Racism	64%	25%	39%	29%	6%	2%	71%	69%
Religious intolerance	51%	18%	33%	32%	14%	4%	65%	54%
Sexism	51%	15%	36%	37%	10%	3%	45%	52%
Ageism	49%	15%	34%	31%	13%	8%	44%	46%
Homophobia	47%	16%	31%	36%	13%	5%	50%	51%

64% think that racism is a major/moderate problem in Australia - down a little compared to when this question was previously asked in June last year. Just over half believe that religious intolerance and sexism are major/moderate problems.

Those most likely to think racism a major/moderate problem were women (68%), Greens voters (85%) and Labor voters (71%).

Those most likely to think sexism a major/moderate problem were women (58%) and Greens voters (70%).

Those most likely to think homophobia a major/moderate problem were women (54%), Greens voters (77%), Labor voters (54%) and aged 18-34 (56%).

54% of those aged 55+ think ageism is a major/moderate problem.

There were no substantial differences between groups on views about religious intolerance.

Experience of forms of intolerance

Q. Have you personally experienced or witnessed any of the following forms of intolerance in the past 12 months?

	Total	Men	Women	Aged 18-34	Aged 35-54	Aged 55+	Total Jun 13
Racism	36%	37%	35%	47%	33%	26%	39%
Sexism	29%	25%	33%	41%	26%	19%	29%
Religious intolerance	28%	27%	28%	35%	27%	19%	29%
Ageism	26%	23%	28%	22%	25%	30%	24%
Homophobia	24%	25%	22%	36%	19%	15%	26%

36% say they have experienced or witnessed racism in the past 12 months, while about one quarter have experienced or witnessed each of the other forms of intolerance. These figures have changed little since this question was last asked in June last year.

Younger people were much more likely to have experienced/witnessed racism, homophobia, sexism and religious intolerance. 30% of those aged 55+ say they have experienced/witnessed ageism. 33% of women say they have experienced/witnessed sexism.

Appendix: Methodology, margin of error and professional standards

The data gathered for this report is gathered from a weekly online omnibus conducted by Your Source. Essential Research has been utilizing the Your Source online panel to conduct research on a week-by-week basis since November 2007.

Each week, the team at Essential Media Communications discusses issues that are topical and a series of questions are devised to put to the Australian public. Some questions are repeated regularly (such as political preference and leadership approval), while others are unique to each week and reflect 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 panellist 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+ interviews. In theory, with a sample of this size, there is 95 per cent certainty that the results are within 3 percentage points of what they would be if the entire population had been polled. However, this assumes random sampling, which, because of non-response and less than 100% population coverage cannot be achieved in practice. Furthermore, there are other possible sources of error in all polls including question wording and question order, interviewer bias (for telephone and face-to-face polls), response errors and weighting. The best guide to a poll's accuracy is to look at the record of the polling company - how have they performed at previous elections or other occasions where their estimates can be compared with known population figures. In the last poll before the 2010 election, the Essential Report estimates of first preference votes were all within 1% of the election results.

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. Essential Research 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.

All Essential Research and senior Your Source staff hold Australian Market and Social Research Society (AMSRS) membership and are bound by professional codes of behaviour. Your Source is an Australian social and market research company specializing in recruitment, field research, data gathering and data analysis. Essential Research is a member of the Association Market and Social Research Organisations (AMSRO). 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. Both Essential Research and Your Source are ISO accredited market research companies. This research was conducted in compliance with AS: ISO20252 guidelines.