

The Essential Report

6 May 2014





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Prepared by: Essential Research

Data supplied: 

The logo for 'your source' consists of a stylized sunburst or fan shape made of blue lines radiating from a central point. Below the graphic, the words 'your source' are written in a lowercase, sans-serif font.

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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 29th April to 5th May 2014 and is based on 1069 respondents.

Aside from the standard question on voting intention, this week's report includes questions on the government's management of the economy, who Australians trust most to handle Australia's economy, party best at handling various aspects of the economy, concerns about job losses, the perceived gap between rich and poor, most concerning economic issues, the deficit tax and paid parents leave.

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 = 1,929 respondents

First preference/leaning to	Election 7 Sep 13	4 weeks ago 8/4/14	2 weeks ago 22/4/14	Last week 29/4/14	This week 06/05/14
Liberal		40%	39%	38%	38%
National		3%	2%	2%	3%
Total Lib/Nat	45.6%	42%	41%	40%	40%
Labor	33.4%	38%	37%	38%	38%
Greens	8.6%	9%	11%	10%	10%
Palmer United Party	5.5%	3%	5%	5%	5%
Other/Independent	6.9%	8%	6%	6%	8%

2 Party Preferred	Election 7 Sep 13	4 weeks ago 8/4/14	2 weeks ago 22/4/14	Last week 29/4/14	This week 06/05/14
Liberal National	53.5%	49%	49%	48%	48%
Labor	46.5%	51%	51%	52%	52%

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.

Management of the Australian economy

Q. How would you rate the government's management of the Australian economy compared to how governments in other countries around the world have managed their economies?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other	6 May 2013 (Labor Government)
Total Good	40%	24%	68%	22%	30%	39%
Total Poor	31%	47%	6%	55%	43%	32%
Very good	9%	3%	17%	6%	7%	11%
Good	31%	21%	51%	16%	23%	28%
Neither good nor poor	24%	26%	23%	24%	25%	24%
Poor	14%	20%	4%	20%	18%	17%
Very poor	17%	27%	2%	35%	25%	15%
Don't know	5%	4%	3%	-	2%	5%

40% of Australians would rate the government's management of the economy, compared to other countries around the world, as good.

31% would rate their management of the economy as poor.

There has been no major shift in attitudes since the last time this question was asked in May 2013 (for the then Labor Government).

Labor (24%), Green (22%) and other (30%) voters were less likely to rate the government's management of the economy as 'good'. Lib/Nat voters (64%) were more likely to rate the government's management of the economy as 'good'.

Those aged 65+ were more likely to rate the government's management of the economy as 'good' (55%).

Trust to handle the economy

Q. Who would you trust most to handle Australia's economy – The Treasurer Joe Hockey or the Shadow Treasurer Chris Bowen?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other
Joe Hockey	33%	6%	73%	1%	21%
Chris Bowen	27%	53%	5%	42%	22%
Don't know	41%	41%	22%	57%	57%

33% of Australians most trust Joe Hockey to handle Australia's economy. 27% most trust Chris Bowen. The largest proportion of Australian's selected 'don't know' (41%).

Although Labor voters were more likely to select Chris Bowen (53%), 41% still selected 'don't know'.

Lib/Nat voters were more likely to select Joe Hockey (73%), but 22% still picked 'don't know'.

Green voters were more likely to select Chris Bowen, with the majority (57%) selecting don't know.

Party best at looking after the economy

Q. Which party – Labor or Liberal – do you think is best when it comes to:

	Labor	Liberal	No Difference	Don't Know	Difference (Labor v. Liberal)
Representing the interests of Australian working families	47%	20%	26%	7%	27%
Representing the interests of you and people like you	39%	29%	24%	8%	10%
Standing up for the middle class in Australia	38%	24%	29%	9%	14%
Representing the interests of the large corporate and financial interests	13%	54%	22%	11%	-41%
Being more concerned about the interests of working families in Australia than the rich and large business and financial interests	46%	17%	26%	10%	29%
Handling the economy overall	26%	40%	23%	10%	-14%
Handling the economy in a way that tries to take the interests of working families into consideration as much as it takes the interests of the large corporate and financial groups	37%	27%	23%	13%	10%
Handling the economy in a way that best helps small business	27%	32%	28%	13%	-5%
Handling the economy in a way that best helps the middle class	31%	30%	27%	12%	1%
Handling the economy in a way that helps you and people like you the most.	37%	29%	23%	11%	8%

Labor was more likely to be selected as the party best at all of the items, except for 'Representing the interests of the large corporate and financial interests' (54% Liberal, 13% Labor), 'Handling the economy overall' (40% Liberal, 26% Labor) and 'Handling the economy in a way that best helps small business' (32% Liberal, 27% Labor).

Concern about job losses

Q. How concerned are you that you or some member of your immediate family will lose their job in the next year or so: very concerned, somewhat concerned, or not at all concerned?

	Total	Male	Female	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other	Aug 2012	Feb 2014
Total Concerned	57%	54%	60%	68%	47%	58%	63%	47%	55%
Very concerned	23%	22%	25%	31%	15%	23%	30%	13%	22%
Somewhat concerned	34%	32%	35%	37%	32%	35%	33%	34%	33%
Not at all concerned	29%	31%	28%	18%	45%	25%	23%	37%	31%
Don't know	7%	8%	5%	6%	5%	5%	7%	8%	6%
No employees in the immediate family	7%	7%	7%	7%	4%	11%	9%	7%	8%

Just over half (57%) of Australians are concerned that they, or a member of their immediate family will lose their jobs in the next year or so.

This is an increase of +3% from when the question was last asked in February 2014, and an increase of +10% from August 2013.

Females (60%) are more likely to be concerned than males (54%).

Labor (68%) and Other (63%) voters are more likely to be concerned. Lib/Nat (47%) are less likely to be concerned. Lib/Nat voters are the group most likely to indicate that they are not at all concerned (45% compared to 29% for the overall sample).

Those aged 35-54 were the most likely to be concerned (62%).

Those in VIC were the least likely to be concerned (53%). Those in QLD (63%) and NSW (59%) were more likely.

Gap between rich and poor

Q. In the past 10 years, do you believe the gap between the rich and everyone else has increased, decreased or stayed the same?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other
Total increased	77%	84%	68%	87%	80%
Total decreased	3%	1%	4%	1%	6%
Increased a lot	47%	58%	32%	56%	58%
Increased a little	30%	26%	36%	31%	22%
Stayed the same	15%	11%	23%	8%	12%
Decreased a little	2%	1%	4%	1%	3%
Decreased a lot	1%	-	-	-	3%
Don't know	5%	5%	5%	4%	3%

Over three-quarters (77%) of Australians believe that the gap between the rich and everyone else has increased. Just 3% believe it has decreased.

Labor (84%) and Greens (87%) voters were more likely to think that it had increased, while Lib/Nat voters were less likely (68%).

Own financial situation

Q. How would you rate your own personal financial situation currently?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other
Total Good	29%	24%	37%	29%	21%
Total Poor	26%	32%	17%	34%	37%
Very good	4%	3%	5%	4%	1%
Good	25%	21%	32%	25%	20%
Fair	42%	41%	45%	35%	41%
Poor	17%	18%	12%	27%	26%
Very poor	9%	14%	5%	7%	11%
I'd rather not say	2%	3%	1%	1%	1%

Just 29% of Australians would rate their own current financial situation as 'good'. 26% would rate it as poor, with the largest proportion rating their current financial situation as 'fair' (45%).

Lib/Nat voters (37%) were more likely to rate their current financial situation as good. Labor (24%) and Other (21%) voters were less likely.

Although males and females differed little in the percentage who rated their current financial situation as 'good' (29% each), females (29%) were more likely than males (22%) to rate their financial situation as 'poor'. Males (47%) were more likely than females (38%) to rate their situation as 'fair'.

Those in QLD (37%) were more likely to rate their situation as 'good'. Those in NSW (27%) and VIC (26%) were less likely.

Most concerning economic issues

Q. Which Australian economic issue worries you most?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other
Unemployment	11%	15%	9%	16%	6%
The cost of living	56%	63%	49%	46%	70%
The current budget deficit	6%	1%	14%	5%	2%
National debt	5%	2%	12%	2%	5%
House prices	7%	6%	7%	9%	6%
The high Australian dollar	2%	2%	2%	4%	2%
Insecure employment	7%	9%	4%	15%	7%
Don't know	2%	1%	2%	2%	-
None of these	2%	1%	1%	2%	2%

The majority of Australians (56%) selected 'the cost of living' as the Australian economic issue that worries them most.

At 11% 'unemployment' was the second most frequently selected.

Labor (63%) and Other (70%) voters were even more likely to select 'the cost of living'. Lib/Nat (49%) and Green (46%) voters were less likely.

Females (63%) were more likely than males (50%) to select the cost of living. Those aged 65+ were less likely to select 'the cost of living' (50%), and were more likely to select 'the current budget deficit' (17%) and 'national debt' (12%).

Support for deficit tax

Q. Would you support or oppose a temporary 'deficit' tax on high and middle income earners aimed at bringing the budget back to surplus?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other
Total Support	34%	30%	46%	20%	34%
Total Oppose	34%	43%	24%	39%	34%
Strongly support	11%	12%	13%	10%	10%
Support	23%	18%	33%	10%	24%
Neither support nor oppose	24%	17%	25%	26%	28%
Oppose	13%	14%	11%	19%	10%
Strongly oppose	21%	29%	13%	20%	24%
Don't know	9%	10%	4%	15%	3%

34% of Australian's support the deficit tax, while 34% oppose it. 24% neither support nor oppose.

Lib/Nat voters (46%) are more likely to support the tax, but 24% do oppose it.

Labor (43%) and Greens (39%) voters are more likely to oppose the tax, however 30% of Labor voters, and 20% of Greens voters support it.

Those aged 65+ were the age group most likely to support the tax, with 52% indicating that they support it. Those aged 55-64 also had higher levels of support (40%).

Those in QLD (43%) were also more likely to support the tax.

Attitude towards deficit tax

Q. Which of the following is closest to your view:

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other
Introducing a new 'deficit' tax would be a broken promise by the Abbott Government	48%	71%	24%	70%	54%
It is more important to reduce the deficit than stick to pre-election promises	33%	14%	61%	8%	34%
Don't know	19%	15%	15%	22%	11%

48% of Australian's would consider a new 'deficit' tax to be a broken promise by the Abbott Government.

33% believe it is more important to reduce the deficit than stick to pre-election promises.

Labor (71%) and Green (70%) voters were more likely to consider the deficit tax a broken promise. Lib/Nat voters were more likely to think that it is more important to reduce the deficit than stick to pre-election promises (61%).

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 \$100,000) 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	Feb 14*
The government's policy	19%	17%	24%	18%	16%	23%
The current policy	36%	48%	26%	50%	32%	36%
Neither	34%	26%	40%	22%	43%	32%
Don't know	11%	9%	11%	10%	9%	9%

**The Feb 2014 question outlined the original Liberal policy, which would have given up to 26 weeks leave at the parent's current full rate of pay up to \$150,000.*

The largest proportion (36%) of Australians prefers the current parental leave policy. Just 19% support the government's policy; while a large proportion (34%) support neither.

The latest results show a slight drop in support for the government's policy (down from 23% in February 2014; this question included the original upper limit of \$150,000).

Labor voters were more likely to support the current policy (48%). However, 17% support the government's policy, and 26% support neither. Lib/Nat voters were most likely to support neither policy (40%). However, 24% support the government's policy, and 26% support the current policy.

Those aged 18-34 were most likely to support the government's policy (33%). Those aged 35-44 were reflective of the overall sample, with 20% supporting the government's policy, 36% supporting the current policy and 29% supporting neither. Those aged 45+ were far more likely to select 'neither' (47%), with just 9% supporting the government's policy, and 36% the current policy.

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.