

The Essential Report

7 October 2014





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Prepared by: Essential Research

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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 3rd to 6th October 2014 and is based on 1,019 respondents.

Aside from the standard question on voting intention, this week's report includes questions on Government decisions, economic issues, housing affordability and taxation.

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 = 1,796 respondents

First preference/leaning to	Election 7 Sep 13	4 weeks ago 9/9/14	2 weeks ago 23/9/14	Last week 30/9/14	This week 7/10/14
Liberal		36%	36%	37%	38%
National		3%	3%	2%	2%
Total Liberal/National	45.6%	39%	39%	40%	40%
Labor	33.4%	38%	39%	39%	39%
Greens	8.6%	10%	10%	10%	10%
Palmer United Party	5.5%	4%	4%	4%	4%
Other/Independent	6.9%	9%	8%	8%	7%

2 Party Preferred	Election 7 Sep 13	4 weeks ago 9/9/14	2 weeks ago 23/9/14	Last week 30/9/14	This week 7/10/14
Liberal National	53.5%	48%	47%	48%	48%
Labor	46.5%	52%	53%	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.

Government decisions

Q. Do you approve or disapprove of the following decisions the Federal Government has made over the last 12 months?

	Total approve	Total dis-approve	Net	Strongly approve	Approve	Dis-approve	Strongly dis-approve	No opinion
Turning back asylum seeker boats	61%	30%	+31	37%	24%	15%	15%	10%
Freezing foreign aid at current levels	58%	27%	+31	25%	33%	14%	13%	15%
Dumping the carbon tax	53%	34%	+19	24%	29%	14%	20%	12%
Sending military aid to Iraq	44%	43%	+1	12%	32%	20%	23%	13%
Dumping the mining tax	41%	42%	-1	15%	26%	19%	23%	18%
A six-month wait for under-30's before they can receive unemployment benefits	38%	52%	-14	16%	22%	21%	31%	10%
Cutting public sector jobs	34%	52%	-18	10%	24%	28%	24%	14%
Cutting \$120 million in future funding to the ABC	25%	58%	-33	11%	14%	28%	30%	17%
Increasing the pension age	28%	63%	-35	9%	19%	28%	35%	9%
\$7 co-payment for visits to the doctor	27%	66%	-39	7%	20%	22%	44%	8%
Deregulating university fees	22%	63%	-41	6%	16%	23%	40%	14%
Cutting \$20 billion from future hospital funding to the states	12%	81%	-69	4%	8%	27%	54%	8%

The most approved Government decisions were turning back asylum seeker boats (61% approve), freezing foreign aid (58%) and dumping the carbon tax (53%). The most disapproved decisions were cutting \$20 billion from hospital funding (81% disapprove), \$7 co-payment for doctor visits (66%), deregulating university fees (63%) and increasing the pension age (63%).

Sending military aid to Iraq was approved by men (51% approve/39% disapprove) but disapproved by women (37% approve/47% disapprove). The \$7 co-payment was disapproved by 72% of those aged 45-64 and 71% of those earning less than \$1,000 pw. Deregulating university fees was disapproved by 77% of those aged 18-24.

Management of the 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	May 2013	May 2014
Total Good	39%	21%	68%	25%	19%	39%	40%
Total Poor	28%	44%	7%	52%	38%	32%	31%
Very good	11%	5%	22%	4%	2%	11%	9%
Good	28%	16%	46%	21%	17%	28%	31%
Neither good nor poor	28%	31%	24%	18%	34%	24%	24%
Poor	15%	22%	6%	20%	20%	17%	14%
Very poor	13%	22%	1%	32%	18%	15%	17%
Don't know	5%	3%	1%	4%	9%	5%	5%

39% of Australians would rate the government's management of the economy, compared to other countries around the world, as good. 28% would rate their management of the economy as poor.

There have been no major shifts in attitudes since this question was asked in May.

Labor (21%), Greens (25%) and other (19%) voters were less likely to rate the government's management of the economy as 'good'. Lib/Nat voters (68%) were more likely to rate the government's management of the economy as 'good'.

47% of those earning \$1,600+ pw rate the government's management 'good' and 35% of those earning less than \$1,000 pw rate it 'poor'.

Concern about economic issues

Q. How concerned are you personally about the following economic issues?

	Very concerned	Somewhat concerned	Not so concerned	Not at all concerned	Don't know
Cost of electricity and gas	57%	28%	12%	2%	2%
Cost of petrol	49%	33%	11%	4%	3%
Cost of food and groceries	45%	37%	13%	3%	2%
Housing affordability	40%	35%	18%	4%	3%
Job security	35%	34%	21%	8%	3%
Wealth disparity	33%	30%	22%	7%	9%
Unemployment	31%	41%	19%	6%	4%
Tax levels	28%	36%	25%	8%	4%
Interest rates	25%	31%	30%	11%	3%
Value of the Australian dollar	22%	31%	34%	8%	5%
The current budget deficit	21%	33%	29%	11%	6%
National debt	21%	33%	30%	11%	5%

Economic issues of most concern were cost of electricity/gas (57% very concerned), cost of petrol (49%), cost of food and groceries (45%) and housing affordability (40%).

68% of those aged 45+ were very concerned about the cost of electricity/gas.

Women were more concerned than men about cost of food and groceries (51% vs 39% very concerned), cost of electricity/gas (62% vs 52%) and cost of petrol (56% vs 43%).

Housing affordability

Q. Thinking about housing supply and affordability - which of the following would be the best way to make housing more affordable? And which would second?

	Best way to make housing affordable	Second best way to make housing affordable	Total
Make it easier for first home buyers to get a mortgage	20%	17%	37%
Increase the first home buyers grant	13%	15%	28%
Scrap negative gearing (which is a tax benefit to investors)	17%	10%	27%
Open up more land for development around the city fringes	11%	12%	23%
Build more medium density housing	9%	13%	22%
Build more public housing	11%	9%	20%
Build more high rise housing	2%	5%	7%
Don't know	15%	6%	15%

The best ways to make housing more affordable were thought to be making it easier for first home buyers to get a mortgage (37%), increasing the first home buyers grant (28%) and scrapping negative gearing (27%).

Among those aged 18-35, 38% favoured making it easier to get a mortgage and 38% favoured increasing the first home buyers grant. 36% of those aged 55+ favoured scrapping negative gearing.

Income tax

Q. Do you consider that the amount of income tax you pay is too high, too low or about right?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other
Too high	42%	41%	42%	40%	41%
About right	40%	39%	46%	47%	38%
Too low	3%	2%	2%	5%	6%
Not sure	15%	18%	10%	8%	15%

42% think that the amount of income tax they pay is too high and 40% think it is about right.

Those more likely to think it is too high were full-time workers (52%), aged 35-54 (52%) and incomes over \$1,600 pw (49%).

Those more likely to think it is about right were aged 55+ (53%) and incomes \$1,000-\$1,600 pw (47%).

Taxes and services

Q. Would you rather have more government services if that meant more taxes, less government services in order to reduce taxes or services and taxes about as we have them now?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other
More services and more taxes	19%	25%	13%	31%	21%
Less services and reduce taxes	28%	24%	33%	19%	28%
Services and taxes as now	35%	33%	39%	31%	31%
Don't know	19%	17%	14%	20%	20%

35% are satisfied with the balance of taxes and services as we have them now, 28% want less services and reduced taxes and 19% would pay more taxes for more services.

Those most likely to want lower taxes and services were Liberal/National voters (33%) and full-time workers (33%).

Those most likely to prefer more services and taxes were Greens voters (31%) and those with university education (26%).

Tax paid by corporations

Q. Do you think that making big corporations pay more tax would be good for the economy because it would increase Government revenue or bad for the economy because the companies would be less competitive?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other
Good for the economy	59%	68%	52%	76%	60%
Bad for the economy	17%	13%	26%	8%	20%
Don't know	24%	20%	22%	16%	21%

59% think that making big corporations pay more tax would be good for the economy and 17% think it would be bad.

A majority of all voter groups thought it would be good for the economy - although Liberal/National voters were the most likely to think it would be bad for the economy (26%).

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.