

The Essential Report

16 December 2014





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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 12th to 15th December 2014 and is based on 1,016 respondents.

Aside from the standard question on voting intention, this week's report includes questions on climate change, expectations for the next election, the Great Barrier Reef, the coal industry and the Medicare rebate.

The methodology used to carry out this research is described in the appendix on page 14.

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 = 1,792 respondents

First preference/leaning to	Election 7 Sep 13	4 weeks ago 18/11/14	2 weeks ago 2/12/14	Last week 9/12/14	This week 16/12/14
Liberal		37%	37%	35%	35%
National		3%	3%	4%	4%
Total Liberal/National	45.6%	40%	40%	39%	40%
Labor	33.4%	38%	40%	39%	38%
Greens	8.6%	10%	9%	10%	10%
Palmer United Party	5.5%	3%	3%	2%	2%
Other/Independent	6.9%	9%	8%	10%	10%

2 Party Preferred	Election 7 Sep 13	4 weeks ago 18/11/14	2 weeks ago 2/12/14	Last week 9/12/14	This week 16/12/14
Liberal National	53.5%	48%	47%	47%	48%
Labor	46.5%	52%	53%	53%	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.

Climate change

Q. Do you believe that there is fairly conclusive evidence that climate change is happening and caused by human activity or do you believe that the evidence is still not in and we may just be witnessing a normal fluctuation in the earth's climate which happens from time to time?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other	Nov 09	Dec 10	Jun 11	Oct 12	Oct 13	Sep 14
Climate change is happening and is caused by human activity	57%	70%	42%	87%	49%	53%	45%	50%	48%	52%	56%
We are just witnessing a normal fluctuation in the earth's climate	29%	21%	44%	3%	38%	34%	36%	39%	39%	36%	30%
Don't know	14%	9%	14%	9%	13%	13%	19%	12%	13%	12%	14%

57% (up 1% since June) agree that climate change is happening and is caused by human activity and 29% (down 1%) believe that we may just be witnessing a normal fluctuation in the earth's climate. This is the highest level of belief in climate change recorded in Essential polls - and the lowest level of disbelief.

By age groups, those aged under 35 split 67%/20% and those aged 55+ split 41%/48%. People with higher education were more likely to think climate change is happening and is caused by human activity - those with university degrees split 68%/22%.

Concern about climate change

Q. Over the last 2 years, have you become more concerned or less concerned about the environmental effects of global warming or do you feel about the same as you did 2 years ago?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other	Sep 14
Total more concerned	51%	62%	38%	78%	47%	52%
Total less concerned	9%	5%	16%	3%	9%	9%
Much more concerned	21%	31%	11%	40%	16%	22%
A little more concerned	30%	31%	27%	38%	31%	30%
About the same	35%	29%	43%	17%	43%	35%
A little less concerned	6%	4%	10%	3%	6%	6%
Much less concerned	3%	1%	6%	-	3%	3%
Don't know	5%	3%	3%	3%	2%	4%

51% say they have become more concerned about the environmental effects of global warming over the last two years and 9% have become less concerned - 35% feel about the same.

These results are very similar to those when this question was asked in September.

Those most likely to have become more concerned were Labor voters (62%), Greens voters (78%) and people with university degrees (62%).

Countries doing enough on climate change

Q. As far as you know, do you think the following countries are doing enough, not enough or too much to address climate change?

	Doing enough	Not doing enough	Doing too much	Don't know
Australia	26%	51%	6%	16%
USA	17%	53%	5%	25%
China	9%	63%	3%	25%

51% of respondents think Australia is not doing enough to address climate change - while 53% think the USA is not doing enough and 63% think China is not doing enough. Only 26% think that Australia is doing enough.

Those most likely to think Australia is not doing enough were aged 18-34 (57%), Greens voters (91%), Labor voters (65%) and people with university education (59%).

Next election

Q. Which party do you think is most likely to win the next Federal election due in 2016?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other
Labor Party	46%	84%	16%	66%	40%
Liberal/National Party	27%	2%	64%	7%	16%
Can't say	27%	14%	20%	27%	44%

46% think the Labor Party is most likely to win the next election and 27% think the Liberal/National Party is most likely to win. 27% could not give an opinion.

84% of Labor voters think the Labor Party is most likely to win and 64% of Liberal/National voters think the Liberal/National Party will win.

Tony Abbott leader at next election

Q. Do you think Tony Abbott is likely or unlikely to still be the leader of the Liberal Party at the next election?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other
Likely	29%	16%	50%	19%	29%
Unlikely	51%	72%	29%	68%	60%
Don't know	20%	12%	21%	13%	11%

51% think that Tony Abbott is unlikely to still be leader of the Liberal Party at the next election and 29% think it is likely.

72% of Labor voters and 68% of Greens voters think it is unlikely and 50% of Liberal/National voters think it is likely he will still be leader.

Bill Shorten leader at next election

Q. Do you think Bill Shorten is likely or unlikely to still be the leader of the Labor Party at the next election?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other
Likely	47%	59%	45%	47%	44%
Unlikely	20%	12%	28%	13%	29%
Don't know	33%	29%	27%	40%	27%

47% think that Bill Shorten is likely to still be leader of the Labor Party at the next election and 20% think it is unlikely.

All voter groups were more likely to think he would still be leader.

Great Barrier Reef

Q. The UNESCO World Heritage Committee has indicated it might declare the Great Barrier Reef “in danger” due to the impact of climate change, crown of thorns starfish and port development. The Australian Government says the Reef is not in danger and they are doing enough to preserve it. Who do you agree with more?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other
UNESCO World Heritage Committee	55%	69%	34%	86%	63%
Australian Government	20%	12%	38%	1%	17%
Don't know	25%	19%	29%	13%	20%

55% agree more with the UNESCO World Heritage Committee that the Great Barrier Reef is in danger and 20% agree more that the Government is doing enough to preserve it.

Labor voters (69%) and Greens voters (86%) are much more likely to agree with the World Heritage Committee while Liberal/National voters are split 34% UNESCO and 38% Government.

Expansion of coal industry

Q. Do you think Australia should or should not continue to expand our coal industry - including approving new mines and building railway lines and ports?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other
Should continue to expand	34%	30%	52%	9%	26%
Should not continue to expand	40%	46%	26%	83%	48%
Don't know	26%	24%	21%	8%	25%

40% believe that Australia's coal industry should not continue to expand and 34% think it should.

Highest support for continued expansion of the coal industry came from Liberal/National voters (52%), men (39%) and aged 65+ (43%).

46% of Labor voters and 83% of Greens voters thought the coal industry should not continue to expand.

Medicare rebate

Q. Do you approve or disapprove of the recent Government announcement to drop the proposed \$7 Medicare co-payment but reduce the doctor's rebate by \$5 and allow the doctor to bill non-concession card holders for that additional \$5?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other
Total approve	40%	29%	63%	17%	38%
Total disapprove	44%	60%	25%	62%	44%
Strongly approve	13%	11%	20%	5%	8%
Approve	27%	18%	43%	12%	30%
Disapprove	21%	23%	16%	33%	24%
Strongly disapprove	23%	37%	9%	29%	20%
Don't know	17%	10%	12%	20%	19%

Respondents were divided on approval of the recent change to charges for GP visits.

40% approved of the recent Government announcement to drop the proposed \$7 Medicare co-payment but reduce the doctor's rebate by \$5 and allow the doctor to bill non-concession card holders for that additional \$5 and 44% disapproved.

Those most likely to approve were Liberal/National voters (63%) and aged 65+ (50%).

Those most likely to disapprove were Labor voters (60%), Greens voters (62%) and aged 45-54 (48%).

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.