

The Essential Report

1 September 2015





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Prepared by: Essential Research

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Essential Media Communications is a member of
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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 26th to 30th August and is based on 1,028 respondents.

Aside from the standard question on voting intention, this week's report includes questions on party trust to handle issues, opinion of Q&A, the NBN, perceptions of political parties, the economy and interest represented by the major parties.

The methodology used to carry out this research is described in the appendix on page 13.

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 = 1,799 respondents

First preference/leaning to	Election 7 Sep 13	4 weeks ago 4/8/15	2 weeks ago 18/8/15	Last week 25/8/15	This week 1/9/15
Liberal		36%	38%	38%	37%
National		3%	3%	3%	3%
Total Liberal/National	45.6%	39%	41%	41%	40%
Labor	33.4%	38%	38%	37%	38%
Greens	8.6%	12%	10%	10%	11%
Palmer United Party	5.5%	1%	2%	1%	2%
Other/Independent	6.9%	9%	9%	10%	10%

2 Party Preferred	Election 7 Sep 13	4 weeks ago 4/8/15	2 weeks ago 18/8/15	Last week 25/8/15	This week 1/9/15
Liberal National	53.5%	47%	48%	49%	48%
Labor	46.5%	53%	52%	51%	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.

Party Trust to Handle Issues

Q. Which party would you trust most to handle the following issues?

	Liberal	Labor	Greens	Don't know	Difference	Difference Feb 2015
Management of the economy	40%	24%	5%	31%	+16	+17
Ensuring a quality education for all children	29%	33%	8%	31%	-4	-10
Ensuring the quality of Australia's health system	29%	31%	8%	31%	-2	-10
Protecting the environment	20%	15%	40%	25%	-20	-25
A fair industrial relations system	27%	35%	7%	31%	-8	-10
Political leadership	32%	23%	8%	36%	+9	+7
Addressing climate change	21%	19%	33%	27%	-12	-17
Controlling interest rates	37%	21%	5%	37%	+16	+13
Australian jobs and protection of local industries	29%	34%	6%	31%	-5	-9
Ensuring a quality water supply	27%	20%	21%	32%	+7	+6
Housing affordability	27%	27%	7%	38%	-	-6
Ensuring a fair taxation system	32%	28%	7%	33%	+4	-2
Security and the war on terrorism	40%	20%	5%	34%	+20	+19
Treatment of asylum seekers	31%	19%	19%	31%	+12	+13
Managing population growth	31%	20%	8%	41%	+11	+12

Note - Differences are calculated by subtracting Labor % from Liberal % - except for the two issues on which the Greens lead in which case it is Liberal minus Greens.

The Liberal Party is trusted more to handle security and the war on terrorism (+20), management of the economy (+16), controlling interest rates (+16) and treatment of asylum seekers (+12). The Labor Party is trusted more to handle a fair industrial relations system (-8) and Australian jobs and protection of local industries (-5).

Main changes since this question was asked in February have been an improvement for the Liberal Party on the health system (up net 8 points), education (up 6), housing affordability (up 6) and taxation (up 6).

Q&A

Q. How would you rate the ABC program Q&A?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other	Total gave opinion
Total good	46%	53%	37%	70%	52%	80%
Total poor	11%	3%	23%	1%	15%	20%
Very good	18%	23%	11%	33%	20%	31%
Good	28%	30%	26%	37%	32%	49%
Poor	4%	2%	7%	1%	7%	8%
Very poor	7%	1%	16%	-	8%	12%
Don't watch it	40%	40%	36%	28%	32%	-
Don't know	4%	3%	4%	1%	1%	-

46% rate Q&A as good and 11% think it is poor. 40% said they don't watch it.

Of those who gave an opinion, 80% think it is good and 20% poor.

NBN

Q. The Government's national broadband network plan is to more quickly roll out fibre to local nodes and let Telstra's copper network carry internet traffic to households, compared to Labor's plan to roll out fibre to every household outside rural areas, which would cost more and have taken longer but produced higher speeds. Which plan do you believe is best for Australia?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other
The Liberal Government's plan	29%	7%	63%	6%	26%
The Labor plan	38%	62%	12%	66%	43%
Don't know	33%	31%	25%	28%	31%

38% think the Labor NBN plan is best for Australia and 29% think the Government's plan is best. 33% did not give an opinion.

These views were consistent across age groups.

Are parties too left wing/right wing?

Q. Do you think the following parties are too right wing/conservative, too left wing/progressive or about right?

	Too right wing/ conservative	Too left wing/ progressive	About right	Don't know
The Labor Party	16%	20%	28%	36%
The Liberal Party	34%	7%	26%	33%
The Nationals	29%	7%	21%	43%
The Greens	9%	30%	20%	41%
Palmer United Party	17%	12%	10%	61%
The Labor Party (Labor voters)	10%	8%	53%	29%
The Liberal Party (Coalition voters)	13%	6%	58%	23%
The Nationals (Coalition voters)	18%	7%	41%	34%
The Greens (Greens voters)	2%	17%	67%	14%

About one-third of respondents think that the Liberal and National parties are too right wing and that the Greens are too left wing.

However they are divided on the Labor Party – 16% think they are too right wing and 20% too left wing.

Among voter groups, more than half think their party is about right. Coalition voters are a little more likely to think the Liberals and Nationals are too right wing and 17% of Greens voters think the Greens are too left wing.

Have parties become more right wing/left wing?

Q. Do you think over the last few years, these parties have become more right wing/conservative, more left wing/progressive or stayed about the same?

	More right wing/ conservative	More left wing/ progressive	About the same	Don't know
The Labor Party	19%	16%	31%	34%
The Liberal Party	27%	8%	33%	32%
The Nationals	20%	6%	35%	39%
The Greens	6%	20%	35%	38%
Palmer United Party	9%	9%	24%	57%
The Labor Party (Labor voters)	19%	9%	43%	29%
The Liberal Party (Coalition voters)	15%	9%	54%	22%
The Nationals (Coalition voters)	13%	6%	51%	30%
The Greens (Greens voters)	5%	18%	55%	22%

Respondents were a little more likely to think the Liberal and National parties have become more right wing and the Greens have become more left wing over the last few years.

Among their own voters, Labor, Liberal and National parties were all seen as a little more right wing.

Economy heading in right or wrong direction

Q. Do you think Australia's economy is heading in the right or wrong direction?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other	May 2010	May 2011	Jun 2012	Apr 2013	Apr 2014	Aug 2014	May 2015
The right direction	35%	22%	62%	21%	26%	51%	45%	43%	36%	39%	35%	35%
The wrong direction	41%	52%	21%	61%	52%	25%	29%	32%	39%	34%	41%	40%
Don't know	24%	26%	16%	189%	21%	24%	25%	25%	25%	26%	24%	25%

35% of respondents think that Australia's economy is heading in the right direction and 41% think it is heading in the wrong direction. This represents no significant change since this question was asked in May.

22% (up 3%) of Labor voters, 62% (down 5%) of Liberal/National voters and 21% (up 12%) of Greens voters think the economy is heading in the right direction. 52% (down 6%) of Labor voters, 61% (down 4%) of Greens voters and 47% of those earning less than \$600pw think the economy is heading in the wrong direction.

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	Very concerned Feb 2015	Change
Cost of electricity and gas	52%	33%	10%	3%	3%	47%	+5
Housing affordability	46%	33%	14%	4%	4%	39%	+7
Cost of food and groceries	42%	39%	13%	3%	3%	35%	+7
Cost of petrol	42%	36%	14%	4%	3%	24%	+18
Job security	35%	39%	15%	6%	5%	29%	+6
Wealth disparity	35%	33%	19%	7%	6%	30%	+5
Unemployment	34%	42%	15%	6%	3%	30%	+4
Value of the Australian dollar	32%	39%	21%	4%	4%	24%	+8
Tax levels	32%	37%	21%	6%	5%	24%	+8
Interest rates	28%	34%	24%	10%	5%	19%	+9
The current budget deficit	25%	39%	24%	7%	6%	27%	-2
National debt	24%	37%	27%	7%	5%	27%	-3

Economic issues of most concern were cost of electricity/gas (52% very concerned), housing affordability (46%), cost of food and groceries (42%) and the cost of petrol (42%). Since February there have been increases in concern about almost all issues – especially cost of petrol (up 18%, although concern was unusually low in February), interest rates (up 9%), tax levels (up 8%), value of the dollar (up 8%), housing affordability (up 7%) and cost of food and groceries (up 7%).

Interests Represented by Parties

Q. Which political party do you think best represents the interests of –

	Labor	Liberal	Greens	Don't know	Net (Labor-Liberal)	Net Nov 2011
Big business	9%	61%	3%	27%	-52	-57
Working people on high incomes	11%	59%	3%	26%	-48	-54
Small businesses and self-employed	25%	40%	4%	31%	-15	-29
Rural and regional Australians	19%	27%	13%	41%	-8	-13
The next generation of Australians	22%	27%	12%	39%	-5	-11
Indigenous people	22%	21%	16%	41%	+1	+11
Ethnic communities	21%	19%	17%	43%	+2	+8
Families with young children	37%	24%	6%	33%	+13	+11
Pensioners	37%	22%	8%	33%	+15	+12
Students	36%	20%	11%	33%	+16	+10
Working people on average incomes	42%	26%	5%	27%	+16	+11
Working people on low incomes	44%	21%	6%	28%	+23	+25
People on welfare	41%	18%	10%	31%	+23	+26

The Labor Party is considered the party which best represents the interests of families with young children, students, working people on low and average incomes, people on welfare and pensioners. The Liberal Party is considered substantially better at representing the interests of people on high incomes, big business and small business and self-employed.

Since this question was asked in November 2011, the Labor Party has improved its position on representing the interests of small business and self-employed (up 14), students (up 6), the next generation (up 6) and people on high incomes (up 6). The Liberal Party has improved its position on representing the interests of indigenous people (up 10) and ethnic communities (up 6).

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.