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15 – 31 Pelham Street
Carlton
Victoria 3053
Phone 03 9929 9903
Mobile 0416 121 969

With data supplied by



About the 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 between the 7th and 11th March 2012 and is based on 1,038 respondents.

Aside from the standard question on voting intention, this week's report includes questions on party leaders, Bob Carr's appointment as Foreign Minister, Australia's wealthiest people, the mining tax, wealth and social class.

The methodology used to carry out this research is available in the appendix on page 15.

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 = 1,902 respondents

First preference/leaning to	Election 21 Aug 10	4 weeks ago	2 weeks ago	Last week	This week
Liberal		44%	46%	47%	46%
National		3%	3%	3%	3%
Total Lib/Nat	43.6%	47%	49%	49%	49%
Labor	38.0%	34%	32%	32%	31%
Greens	11.8%	10%	11%	10%	10%
Other/Independent	6.6%	9%	8%	9%	10%

2PP	Election 21 Aug 10	4 weeks ago	2 weeks ago	Last week	This week
Total Lib/Nat	49.9%	54%	56%	56%	57%
Labor	50.1%	46%	44%	44%	43%

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 2010 election.



Approval of Julia Gillard

Q. Do you approve or disapprove of the job Julia Gillard is doing as Prime Minister?

	19 Jul 2010	20 Dec 2010	14 Mar 2011	14 June	12 Sept	17 Oct	14 Nov	12 Dec	16 Jan 2012	13 Feb	12 Mar
Total approve	52%	43%	41%	34%	28%	34%	37%	34%	37%	36%	32%
Total disapprove	30%	40%	46%	54%	64%	59%	55%	54%	52%	53%	61%
Strongly approve	11%	10%	7%	6%	5%	7%	8%	6%	6%	6%	8%
Approve	41%	33%	34%	28%	23%	27%	29%	28%	31%	30%	24%
Disapprove	17%	24%	22%	29%	28%	27%	25%	25%	27%	26%	29%
Strongly disapprove	13%	16%	24%	25%	36%	32%	30%	29%	25%	27%	32%
Don't know	18%	17%	13%	13%	8%	7%	9%	11%	12%	11%	7%

Julia Gillard's approval rating has dropped substantially since last month. 32% (down 4%) approve of the job Julia Gillard is doing as Prime Minister and 61% (up 8%) disapprove – a change in net rating from -17 to -29 over the last 4 weeks. This is her lowest rating since September.

75% of Labor voters approve (down 4%) and 20% disapprove (up 6%).

By gender – men 32% approve/62% disapprove, women 32% approve/60% disapprove.



Approval of Tony Abbott

Q. Do you approve or disapprove of the job Tony Abbott is doing as Opposition Leader?

	18 Jan 2010	5 Jul 2010	20 Dec 2010	14 Mar 2011	14 June	12 Sept	17 Oct	14 Nov	12 Dec	16 Jan 2012	13 Feb	12 Mar
Total approve	37%	37%	39%	38%	38%	39%	40%	36%	32%	35%	35%	36%
Total disapprove	37%	47%	39%	47%	48%	50%	51%	52%	53%	51%	53%	52%
Strongly approve	5%	8%	9%	7%	6%	8%	8%	6%	6%	7%	6%	7%
Approve	32%	29%	30%	31%	32%	31%	32%	30%	26%	28%	29%	29%
Disapprove	20%	23%	21%	24%	25%	23%	23%	26%	25%	25%	23%	23%
Strongly disapprove	17%	24%	18%	23%	23%	27%	28%	26%	28%	26%	30%	29%
Don't know	26%	16%	22%	16%	15%	11%	9%	12%	14%	13%	12%	12%

Tony Abbott's approval rating has changed little over the last month. 36% (up 1%) approve of the job Tony Abbott is doing as Opposition Leader and 52% (down 1%) disapprove – a change in net rating from -18 to -16 over the last 4 weeks.

70% (up 3%) of Coalition voters approve and 21% (no change) disapprove.

By gender – men 37% approve/54% disapprove, women 36% approve/49% disapprove.



Better Prime Minister

Q. Who do you think would make the better Prime Minister out of Julia Gillard and Tony Abbott?

	5 Jul 2010	14 Mar	14 June	12 Sept	17 Oct	14 Nov	12 Dec	16 Jan 2012	13 Feb	12 Mar	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens
Julia Gillard	53%	44%	41%	36%	38%	41%	39%	39%	41%	40%	84%	6%	74%
Tony Abbott	26%	33%	36%	40%	39%	36%	35%	36%	34%	37%	4%	76%	5%
Don't know	21%	23%	24%	24%	23%	24%	26%	25%	25%	23%	12%	18%	21%

40% (down 1%) believe Julia Gillard would make the better Prime Minister and 37% (up 3%) prefer Tony Abbott - a net change from +7% to +3% for Julia Gillard.

Both men and women prefer Julia Gillard 40%/37%.



Approval of Bob Carr

Q. Do you approve or disapprove of former NSW Premier Bob Carr going into the Senate and taking up the position of Foreign Minister?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens
Total approve	37%	60%	23%	39%
Total disapprove	36%	15%	54%	17%
Strongly approve	7%	17%	2%	7%
Approve	30%	43%	21%	32%
Disapprove	19%	10%	27%	11%
Strongly disapprove	17%	5%	27%	6%
Don't know	27%	25%	22%	45%

Opinions of the former NSW Premier Bob Carr going into the Senate and taking up the position of Foreign Minister were split - 37% approved and 36% disapproved.

60% of Labor voters approved and 54% of Liberal/National voters disapproved.

Respondents from New South Wales were a little more positive - 43% approve and 37% disapprove.



Using Wealth to Influence Opinion and Policy

QA. *The Treasurer Wayne Swan has said some of Australia's wealthiest individuals are using their wealth to try to influence public opinion and government policy to further their own commercial interests. Do you agree or disagree with the Treasurer's statement? **

QB. *Do you agree or disagree that some of Australia's wealthiest individuals are using their wealth to try to influence public opinion and government policy to further their own commercial interests. **

	A. Wayne Swan statement				B. Unattributed statement			
	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens
Total agree	58%	78%	36%	89%	60%	67%	55%	75%
Total disagree	26%	6%	51%	2%	24%	18%	30%	14%
Strongly agree	24%	38%	9%	54%	27%	36%	15%	50%
Agree	34%	40%	27%	35%	33%	31%	40%	25%
Disagree	15%	4%	29%	2%	12%	5%	15%	3%
Strongly disagree	11%	2%	22%	-	12%	13%	15%	11%
Don't know	16%	16%	14%	9%	15%	15%	16%	11%

** each question was asked of half the total sample.*

There was similar majority agreement with this statement - *that some of Australia's wealthiest individuals are using their wealth to try to influence public opinion and government policy to further their own commercial interests* - whether or not it was attributed to Wayne Swan. When attributed to Wayne Swan 58% agreed and 26% disagreed. When unattributed, 60% agreed and 24% disagreed.

When attributed to Wayne Swan, 78% of Labor voters and 89% of Greens voters agreed but 51% of Liberal/National voters disagreed.

When unattributed, a majority of voters of all parties agreed - although Labor and Greens voters not as strongly.



Opinion of Mining Tax

Q. Do you approve or disapprove of the proposed mining tax (called the Minerals Resource Rent Tax) on large profits of mining companies?

	12 Jul 2010	5 Sep 2011	21 Nov	20 Feb 2012	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens
Total approve	50%	46%	51%	55%	52%	76%	33%	79%
Total disapprove	28%	34%	33%	28%	34%	12%	55%	12%
Strongly approve	13%	18%	18%	23%	20%	36%	7%	51%
Approve	37%	28%	33%	32%	32%	40%	26%	28%
Disapprove	18%	18%	20%	17%	22%	9%	34%	10%
Strongly disapprove	10%	16%	13%	11%	12%	3%	21%	2%
Don't know	22%	19%	15%	17%	14%	13%	12%	8%

52% approve the Government's proposed mining tax and 34% disapprove. This represents a weakening in support over the last 3 weeks (from net +27% to net +18%) but a similar result to that of November 2011.

Labor voters (76%) and Greens voters (79%) strongly support the tax - but Liberal/National voters disapprove 55% to 33%.



Income Level to be Middle Income

Q. What annual income level would you say was “middle income” for a single person?

What annual income level would you say was “middle income” for a family of 2 parents and 2 children?

	Single Person				Family			
	Total	Income under \$1,000pw	Income \$1,000 - \$1,600pw	Income \$1,600+	Total	Income under \$1,000pw	Income \$1,000 - \$1,600pw	Income \$1,600+
Less than \$40,000	6%	13%	4%	1%	1%	3%	-	-
\$40,000-\$59,000	31%	35%	34%	28%	7%	14%	5%	2%
\$60,000-\$79,000	38%	32%	41%	47%	21%	27%	25%	15%
\$80,000-\$99,000	15%	12%	14%	17%	28%	26%	33%	29%
\$100,000-\$119,000	3%	2%	4%	3%	20%	14%	21%	26%
\$120,000-\$149,000	1%	1%	1%	1%	11%	9%	8%	17%
\$150,000-\$199,000	*	-	-	1%	5%	2%	4%	10%
\$200,000 or more	*	-	-	-	1%	-	-	1%
Don't know	5%	5%	2%	1%	5%	5%	3%	1%
median	\$66,000	\$60,000	\$65,000	\$69,000	\$94,000	\$83,000	\$92,000	\$103,000

69% of respondents think that “middle income” for a single person is between \$40,00 and \$79,000 a year. 38% think it is \$60,000-\$79,000. 80% of those earning under \$1,000 pw think “middle income” for a single person is less than \$80,000, while those on more than \$1,600 pw are most likely to think it is \$60,000-\$79,000 (47%). The median (average) income for “middle income” for a single person is \$66,000.

Estimates are more broadly spread when it comes to “middle income” families - 69% think it would be between \$60,000 and \$119,000. 65% think it would be at least \$80,000. The median (average) income for “middle income” for a family is \$94,000.



Income Level to be Well Off

Q. What annual income level would you say was the minimum to be “well off” for a single person?

What annual income level would you say was the minimum to be “well off” for a family of 2 parents and 2 children?

	Single Person				Family			
	Total	Income under \$1,000pw	Income \$1,000 - \$1,600pw	Income \$1,600+	Total	Income under \$1,000pw	Income \$1,000 - \$1,600pw	Income \$1,600+
\$40,000	9%	15%	7%	5%	1%	2%	*	1%
\$60,000	26%	28%	31%	23%	6%	13%	5%	2%
\$80,000	28%	25%	27%	33%	15%	21%	17%	10%
\$100,000	19%	15%	20%	24%	17%	19%	19%	15%
\$120,000	7%	5%	6%	9%	16%	12%	19%	17%
\$150,000	3%	3%	3%	5%	21%	16%	18%	29%
\$200,000	1%	*	1%	1%	12%	5%	14%	18%
\$300,000	1%	2%	*	1%	3%	3%	2%	5%
\$500,000	*	*	1%	-	2%	3%	1%	1%
\$1 million	1%	1%	-	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Don't know	5%	6%	4%	1%	5%	5%	4%	1%
median	\$69,000	\$63,000	\$67,000	\$73,000	\$111,000	\$93,000	\$107,000	\$123,000

63% think that a single person earning \$80,000 would be considered “well off”. The average (median) minimum income for a single person to be considered “well off” was \$69,000.

55% think that a family earning \$120,000 would be considered “well off”. The average (median) minimum income for a family to be considered “well off” was \$111,000.



Income Level to be Wealthy

Q. What annual income level would you say was the minimum to be “wealthy” for a single person?

What annual income level would you say was the minimum to be “wealthy” for a family of 2 parents and 2 children?

	Single Person				Family			
	Total	Income under \$1,000pw	Income \$1,000 - \$1,600pw	Income \$1,600+	Total	Income under \$1,000pw	Income \$1,000 - \$1,600pw	Income \$1,600+
\$40,000	2%	3%	1%	-	1%	1%	-	-
\$60,000	6%	10%	4%	6%	2%	2%	3%	*
\$80,000	15%	17%	20%	10%	4%	7%	3%	2%
\$100,000	21%	19%	25%	23%	9%	13%	10%	5%
\$120,000	14%	11%	15%	17%	9%	10%	13%	6%
\$150,000	17%	18%	13%	22%	19%	17%	22%	20%
\$200,000	10%	8%	10%	11%	22%	20%	16%	32%
\$300,000	4%	3%	4%	4%	15%	10%	15%	19%
\$500,000	4%	3%	6%	3%	9%	9%	11%	7%
\$1 million	3%	3%	1%	3%	5%	4%	4%	7%
Don't know	5%	4%	2%	1%	5%	5%	3%	1%
median	\$106,000	\$102,000	\$98,000	\$113,000	\$159,000	\$146,000	\$147,000	\$182,000

58% think that a single person earning \$120,000 would be considered “wealthy”. The average (median) minimum income for a single person to be considered “wealthy” was \$106,000.

66% think that a family earning \$200,000 would be considered “wealthy”. The average (median) minimum income for a family to be considered “wealthy” was \$159,000.



Social Class

Q. Do you believe social classes still exist in Australia?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Income under \$600pw	Income \$600 - \$1,000pw	Income \$1,000 - \$1,600pw	Income \$1,600+
Yes	86%	87%	83%	90%	84%	86%	84%	87%
No	8%	8%	11%	3%	5%	7%	10%	8%
Don't know	7%	5%	6%	7%	10%	7%	7%	5%

86% agreed that social class still exists in Australia - only 8% disagreed. There was little difference across demographic groups - more than 80% of all major groups agreed.



Social Class Identification

Q. Do you consider yourself -

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Income under \$600pw	Income \$600 - \$1,000pw	Income \$1,000 - \$1,600pw	Income \$1,600+
Working class	34%	41%	30%	24%	40%	44%	40%	22%
Middle class	50%	46%	54%	64%	31%	36%	52%	69%
Upper class	1%	*	1%	-	*	-	1%	2%
None of them	12%	11%	12%	12%	27%	18%	6%	5%
Don't know	3%	2%	2%	-	1%	2%	1%	1%

50% of respondents described themselves as “middle class” and 34% as “working class” - only 1% claimed to be “upper class”.

Those on higher incomes were more likely to identify as “middle class” while those on lower incomes were less likely to identify with any of these descriptions.



Appendix One – Methodology

The data gathered for this report is gathered from a weekly online omnibus conducted by Your Source. Your Source is an Australian social and market research company specializing in recruitment, field research, data gathering and data analysis. 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. Senior Your Source staff hold Australian Market and Social Research Society (AMSRS) membership and are bound by professional codes of behavior.

Essential Research has been utilizing the Your Source online panel to conduct research on a week by week basis since November 2007. Each Monday, the team at Essential Media Communications discusses issues that are topical. From there a series of questions are devised to put to the Australian public. Some questions are repeated each week (such as political preference and social perspective), while others are unique to each week and reflect prominent 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 panelist 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+ responses. The Your Source online omnibus is live from the Tuesday night of each week and closed on the following Sunday. Incentives are offered to participants in the form of points.

EMC 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.

