



EssentialReport

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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 from the 12th September to 16th September and is based on 968 respondents.

Aside from the standard question on voting intention, this week's report includes questions on leader attributes, decriminalisation of drugs, attitudes to drug law enforcement and trolling.

The methodology used to carry out this research is available 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 = 2,003 respondents

First preference/leaning to	Election 21 Aug 10	4 weeks ago	2 weeks ago 3/9/12	Last week 10/9/2012	This week
Liberal		46%	44%	44%	45%
National		3%	3%	3%	3%
Total Lib/Nat	43.6%	49%	48%	47%	48%
Labor	38.0%	32%	34%	34%	34%
Greens	11.8%	10%	9%	9%	9%
Other/Independent	6.6%	9%	9%	9%	9%

2PP	Election 21 Aug 10	4 weeks ago	2 weeks ago 3/9/12	Last week 10/9/2012	This week
Total Lib/Nat	49.9%	57%	55%	55%	55%
Labor	50.1%	43%	45%	45%	45%

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. These estimates have a confidence interval of approx. plus or minus 2-3%.

Leader Attributes – Julia Gillard

Q. Which of the following describe your opinion of the Prime Minister, Julia Gillard?

	5 Jul 10	4 Oct 10	7 Feb 11	27 Jun 11	2 Apr 12	17 Sept 12	Change
Intelligent	87%	81%	75%	73%	61%	68%	+7%
Hard-working	89%	82%	76%	75%	65%	69%	+4%
A capable leader	72%	59%	52%	42%	38%	43%	+5%
Arrogant	37%	39%	44%	48%	53%	46%	-7%
Out of touch with ordinary people	35%	44%	50%	60%	65%	56%	-9%
Understands the problems facing Australia	68%	55%	52%	44%	41%	43%	+2%
Visionary	48%	38%	30%	26%	25%	31%	+6%
Superficial			51%	52%	54%	46%	-8%
Good in a crisis	61%	46%	46%	41%	36%	43%	+7%
Narrow-minded	28%	35%	43%	46%	53%	46%	-7%
More honest than most politicians	45%	37%	37%	29%	26%	31%	+5%
Trustworthy	49%	42%	40%	30%	25%	30%	+5%
Intolerant	-	-	-	-	-	37%	
Aggressive	-	-	-	-	-	42%	
Erratic	-	-	-	-	-	43%	

Gillard's key attributes were hard-working (69%), intelligent (68%) and out of touch with ordinary people (56%). All positive leader attributes for Gillard moved up from the last time the question was polled in April 2012. The biggest shifts on the positive attributes were on intelligent (+7%) and visionary (+6%).

All negative attributes shifted down from April. The attributes that had the largest shifts downwards were out of touch with ordinary people (-10%) and superficial (-8%).

Leader Attributes – Tony Abbott

Q. Which of the following describe your opinion of the Opposition Leader, Tony Abbott?

	5 Jul 10	4 Oct 10	7 Feb 11	27 Jun 11	2 Apr 12	17 Sept 12	Change
Intelligent	70%	71%	64%	61%	56%	62%	+6%
Hard-working	76%	78%	72%	75%	68%	67%	-1%
A capable leader	47%	52%	48%	45%	41%	37%	-4%
Arrogant	59%	60%	58%	60%	61%	63%	+2%
Out of touch with ordinary people	57%	53%	54%	57%	54%	57%	+3%
Understands the problems facing Australia	50%	53%	50%	48%	49%	43%	-6%
Visionary	32%	31%	27%	27%	26%	29%	+3%
Superficial			45%	49%	49%	51%	+2%
Good in a crisis	40%	42%	41%	40%	36%	35%	-1%
Narrow-minded	56%	53%	51%	54%	54%	59%	+5%
More honest than most politicians	33%	32%	31%	32%	30%	27%	-3%
Trustworthy	33%	35%	34%	32%	32%	30%	-2%
Intolerant	-	-	-	-	-	53%	-
Aggressive	-	-	-	-	-	59%	-
Erratic	-	-	-	-	-	51%	-

Abbott's key attributes were hard-working (67%), intelligent (62%) and arrogant (63%).

The biggest shifts in the leader attributes for Abbott were on intelligent (+6%), understandings the problems facing Australia (-6%), narrow minded (+5%) and a capable leader (-4%).

Leader Attributes – Comparisons

	Gillard	Abbott	<i>Difference</i>
Intelligent	68%	62%	+6%
Hard-working	69%	67%	+2%
A capable leader	43%	37%	+6%
Arrogant	46%	63%	-17%
Out of touch with ordinary people	56%	57%	-1%
Understands the problems facing Australia	43%	43%	-
Visionary	31%	29%	+2%
Superficial	46%	51%	-5%
Good in a crisis	43%	35%	+8%
Narrow-minded	46%	59%	-13%
More honest than most politicians	31%	27%	+4%
Trustworthy	30%	30%	-
Intolerant	37%	53%	-16%
Aggressive	42%	59%	-17%
Erratic	43%	51%	-8%

Compared to Abbott, Gillard is seen as more intelligent (+6%), a more capable leader (+6%) and good in a crisis (+8%).

Abbott is regarded by significantly more respondents to be arrogant (+17%), narrow minded (+13%), intolerant (+16%) and aggressive (+17%).

Since the last time the question was polled, Gillard has narrowed the gap on 'out of touch with ordinary people' (moving from +11% in April compared to Abbott to -1% this week) as well as 'understands the problem facing Australia' (-8% in April 2012 to equal with Abbott this month).

Attitudes to drug law enforcement

Q. Do you have a close friend or relative (such as a sibling or child) that regularly uses, or regularly used, illegal drugs?

	Total
Yes	17%
No	81%
I'd prefer not to say	2%

Seventeen percent (17%) of respondents polled have a close friend or relative that regularly uses, or used, illegal drugs. The vast majority did not (81%) and 2% elected not to say.

Q. How would you describe the approach to drug law enforcement in Australia:

	Total	Have a close friend or relative	No close friend or relative	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens
Too harsh	8%	18%	6%	12%	4%	23%
Too soft	62%	47%	66%	57%	73%	26%
About right	18%	24%	17%	22%	15%	30%
Don't know	11%	11%	12%	10%	8%	21%

The majority of respondents regard drug law enforcement in Australia to be too soft (62%), followed by 18% who believe it to be about right and 8% who see it as too harsh.

Those with a close friend or relative that regularly uses were far more likely to regard drug law enforcement as too harsh (18%) or about right (24%).

Looking at the results by voting intention, Greens voters were the most likely to regard drug law enforcement as too harsh (23%) whilst Coalition voters were by far the most likely to believe it to be too soft (73%).

Attitudes to decriminalization or legalization

Q. Thinking about the issue of illegal drugs in Australia, which has one of the highest per capita illicit drug use in the world, please indicate which position is closer to your view:

Sample A (N= 468)		Sample B (N=501)	
We should decriminalise all illegal drugs (including production and trafficking within Australia) to reduce the unregulated black market trade in these substances.	8%	We should legalise all illegal drugs (including production and trafficking within Australia) to reduce the unregulated black market trade in these substances.	7%
We should decriminalise small scale illegal drug use and possession, but maintain criminal prohibitions on production and trafficking.	29%	We should legalise small scale illegal drug use and possession, but maintain criminal prohibitions on production and trafficking.	30%
We should prohibit all activities related to illegal drugs in Australia, including production, trafficking, large and small-scale production and use.	53%	We should prohibit all activities related to illegal drugs in Australia, including production, trafficking, large and small-scale production and use.	57%
None of the above	10%	None of the above	7%

The table above shows the results of a randomly split sample on attitudes to drug law reform. The total sample of 968 respondents was randomly split into two and asked a series of slightly different questions (Sample A and Sample B). The difference between the two questions was use of language: in Sample A, 'decriminalisation' was used and in Sample B, 'legalisation' was instead used in its place.

The results show no difference between the samples on the basis of language, as the variations in percentages can be attributed to margin of error for the sample size.

Overall, we see that the most dominant attitude to drug law reform amongst both samples is to 'prohibit all activities related to illegal drugs in Australia, including production, trafficking, large and small-scale production and use' (53% Sample A, 57% Sample B).

About a third of respondents in each sample believe that we should 'decriminalise/legalise small scale illegal drug use and possession, but maintain criminal prohibitions on production and trafficking' (29% Sample A, 30% Sample B).

Attitudes to decriminalization or legalization

Q. Thinking about the issue of illegal drugs in Australia, which has one of the highest per capita illicit drug use in the world, please indicate which position is closer to your view:

Sample A (N= 468)	Total	Have a close friend or relative (n=91)	No close friend or relative (n=368)	Vote Labor (n=136)	Vote Lib/Nat (n=209)	Vote Greens (n=41)
We should decriminalise all illegal drugs (including production and trafficking within Australia) to reduce the unregulated black market trade in these substances.	8%	7%	8%	10%	6%	5%
We should decriminalise small scale illegal drug use and possession, but maintain criminal prohibitions on production and trafficking.	29%	48%	25%	40%	23%	44%
We should prohibit all activities related to illegal drugs in Australia, including production, trafficking, large and small-scale production and use.	53%	40%	57%	40%	62%	44%
None of the above	10%	5%	10%	10%	9%	5%

The largest portion of those respondents with a close friend or relative that regularly uses believe in decriminalizing small scale illegal drug use and possession (48%) compared with 29% of Sample A.

The majority of those that did not have a close friend or relative that regularly uses believed in prohibition of all activities related to illegal drugs in Australia (57%).

Looking at the results by voting intention, Coalition voters were by far the most likely to take the position of prohibition of all activities (62%).

Attitudes to decriminalization or legalization

Q. Thinking about the issue of illegal drugs in Australia, which has one of the highest per capita illicit drug use in the world, please indicate which position is closer to your view:

Sample B (N=501)	Total	Have a close friend or relative (n=69)	No close friend or relative (n=417)	Vote Labor (n=159)	Vote Lib/Nat (n=205)	Vote Greens (n=40)
We should legalise all illegal drugs (including production and trafficking within Australia) to reduce the unregulated black market trade in these substances.	7%	12%	6%	10%	5%	13%
We should legalise small scale illegal drug use and possession, but maintain criminal prohibitions on production and trafficking.	30%	41%	26%	35%	22%	40%
We should prohibit all activities related to illegal drugs in Australia, including production, trafficking, large and small-scale production and use.	57%	45%	59%	50%	67%	30%
None of the above	7%	3%	8%	5%	6%	18%

The largest portion of those respondents with a close friend or relative that regularly uses believe in prohibiting all activities related to illegal drugs in Australia (45%), followed by legalizing small scale illegal drug use and possession (41%), however this difference may be on account of margin of error in the small sub-sample size.

Once again, Coalition voters were the most likely to take the view that ‘we should prohibit all activities related to illegal drugs in Australia...’ (67%) compared to the rest of the sample by voting intention.

Attitudes to decriminalization of specific drugs

Q. *Would you support decriminalisation of any of the following illegal drugs in Australia:*

	Yes	No	Don't know
Cannabis	38%	49%	13%
Ecstasy	14%	78%	7%
Cocaine	13%	80%	7%
Heroin	11%	83%	6%
Amphetamines (such as speed or ice)	10%	83%	7%

For all drugs except cannabis, the vast majority of respondents believed in maintaining prohibitions on the drug.

Support for decriminalisation of cannabis is the strongest at 38% in favour (49% opposed).

Respondents are most strongly against decriminalisation of heroin (83%) and amphetamines (83%).

Male respondents are more likely to favour decriminalisation of cannabis (42%) compared to females (35%). They are also more likely to favour decriminalisation of ecstasy (17%) compared to female respondents (12%).

By voting intention, the majority of Greens voters were in favour of decriminalizing cannabis (56%).

Trolling

Q. Would you support the introduction of government legislation to prevent people from using social media to attack and bully individuals (known as 'trolling')?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens
Total Support	83%	84%	85%	82%
Total Oppose	9%	9%	9%	12%
Strongly support	55%	58%	55%	45%
Support	28%	26%	30%	37%
Oppose	6%	8%	6%	6%
Strongly oppose	3%	1%	3%	6%
Don't know	7%	7%	6%	7%

The vast majority of respondents support the introduction of government legislation to prevent people from trolling (83%), whilst 9% oppose any such introduction.

There are no significant variations by voting intention.

Female respondents are far more likely to strongly support a ban on trolling (61%) compared with male respondents (48%).

Looking at the results by age, those aged 45-54 (61%), 55-64 (61%) and 65+ (69%) were all significantly more likely to strongly support a ban.

Appendix – 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 Wednesday 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.

