

The Essential Report

21 January 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 17th to 20th January 2014 and is based on 1,087 respondents.

Aside from the standard question on voting intention, this week's report includes questions on the economy, expectations of the Federal Government, asylum seekers and climate change.

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 = 1,962 respondents

First preference/leaning to	Election 7 Sep 13	5 weeks ago 17/12/13	This week 21/1/14
Liberal		41%	40%
National		3%	3%
Total Lib/Nat	45.6%	44%	43%
Labor	33.4%	37%	37%
Greens	8.6%	7%	9%
Palmer United Party	5.5%	4%	4%
Other/Independent	6.9%	8%	7%

2 Party Preferred	Election 7 Sep 13	5 weeks ago 17/12/13	This week 21/1/14
Liberal National	53.5%	51%	51%
Labor	46.5%	49%	49%

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.

State of the economy

Q. Overall, how would you describe the current state of the Australian economy?

	28 May 12	8 Apr 13	16 Sep 13	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other
Total good	35%	45%	40%	34%	35%	40%	35%	26%
Total poor	29%	26%	25%	26%	25%	24%	26%	41%
Very good	6%	8%	6%	4%	5%	4%	5%	3%
Good	29%	37%	34%	30%	30%	36%	30%	23%
Neither good nor poor	33%	28%	32%	36%	38%	35%	37%	31%
Poor	20%	17%	20%	21%	19%	21%	22%	31%
Very poor	9%	9%	5%	5%	6%	3%	4%	10%
Don't know	2%	2%	3%	4%	3%	2%	3%	2%

34% described the economy as good or very good and 26% poor/very poor - 36% said it was neither. This represents a net decline from +15 to +8 since September.

Those most likely to think the economy was good/very good were people with incomes over \$1,600pw (41%). Liberal/National voters (40%) were only slightly more likely than Labor voters (35%) to think the economy was good.

Australian economy heading in right or wrong direction

Q. From what you have read and heard, do you think the Australian economy is heading in the right direction or the wrong direction?

	17 May 10	9 May 11	18 Jun 12	29 Apr 13	16 Sep 13	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other
The right direction	51%	45%	43%	36%	44%	38%	23%	63%	21%	33%
The wrong direction	25%	29%	32%	39%	26%	33%	49%	14%	54%	38%
Don't know	24%	25%	25%	25%	30%	29%	28%	24%	25%	29%

38% of respondents think that Australia's economy is heading in the right direction – 33% think it is heading in the wrong direction. Since this question was asked in September, “right direction” has decreased 6% and “wrong direction” increased 7%.

23% (down 17%) of Labor voters, 63% (up 11%) of Liberal/National voters and 21% (down 12%) of Greens voters think the economy is heading in the right direction. 42% of men think the economy is heading in the right direction compared to 35% of women.

Better or worse under Liberal/National Government

Q. Under the new Liberal/National Government, do you expect the following will get better or worse?

	Total better	Total worse	Net	A lot better	A little better	Stay much the same	A little worse	A lot worse	Don't know	Better Sept 13	Worse Sept 13	Net Sept 13
Political leadership	33%	38%	-5	15%	18%	25%	12%	26%	3%	42%	31%	+11
Trust in Government	30%	43%	-13	12%	18%	26%	13%	30%	3%	36%	36%	-
Unemployment	22%	45%	-23	6%	16%	30%	21%	24%	3%	27%	37%	-10
The economy overall	30%	38%	-8	10%	20%	29%	21%	17%	3%	38%	30%	+8
The cost of living	17%	52%	-35	5%	12%	29%	25%	27%	3%	27%	40%	-13
Interest rates	16%	33%	-17	5%	11%	47%	18%	15%	4%	17%	31%	-14
Health services	18%	45%	-27	5%	13%	35%	18%	27%	3%	23%	42%	-19
Job security	17%	49%	-32	5%	12%	32%	21%	28%	3%	22%	43%	-21
Workers rights and conditions	14%	45%	-31	5%	9%	36%	14%	31%	4%	18%	47%	-29
Company profits	40%	18%	+22	13%	27%	38%	8%	10%	4%	47%	14%	+33
The environment	16%	41%	-25	5%	11%	39%	14%	27%	4%	18%	39%	-21
Education and schools	20%	43%	-23	6%	14%	33%	19%	24%	3%	25%	41%	-16
Public services	17%	46%	-29	6%	11%	35%	20%	26%	3%	20%	45%	-25
Benefits for people on Government support - such as pensioners and the unemployed	13%	49%	-36	4%	9%	35%	21%	28%	3%	19%	44%	-25
Your personal financial situation	18%	37%	-19	5%	13%	42%	20%	17%	2%	22%	35%	-13

Except for company profits, respondents believed all issues measured would get worse under the new Liberal/National Government. Expectations on each issue have declined since this question was asked immediately after the election. The largest declines have been for cost of living (net score down 22), the economy overall (-16), political leadership (-16), unemployment (-13) and trust in Government (-13).

Whether asylum seekers are genuine refugees

Q. As far as you know, are most asylum seekers arriving by in Australia boat genuine refugees or are most of them not genuine refugees?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other
Most of them are genuine refugees	30%	41%	18%	67%	24%
Most of them are not genuine refugees	47%	39%	59%	18%	54%
Don't know	23%	20%	23%	15%	22%

47% of respondents believe that most asylum seekers arriving by boat are not genuine refugees - 30% believe most are genuine refugees.

Those more likely to think most are not genuine refugees were Liberal/National voters (59%), aged 45+ (55%) and those who had not completed secondary education (58%). Those more likely to think most are genuine refugees were Greens voters (67%), Labor voters (41%) and those with university education (36%).

Treatment of asylum seekers

Q. Which of the following comes is closest to your view?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other
All asylum seekers arriving in Australia by boat should be sent back to the country they came from even if they are genuine refugees	26%	20%	36%	8%	27%
Asylum seekers arriving by boat should be allowed to stay in Australia if they are found to be genuine refugees	46%	52%	35%	72%	51%
Asylum seekers arriving by boat should not be allowed to stay in Australia but be resettled in another country if they are found to be genuine refugees	15%	13%	19%	4%	17%
All asylum seekers arriving in Australia by boat should be allowed to stay in Australia whether they are genuine refugees or not	3%	5%	1%	7%	1%
Don't know	10%	10%	9%	9%	4%

46% think that asylum seekers arriving by boat should be allowed to stay in Australia if they are found to be genuine refugees and 26% think all asylum seekers arriving in Australia by boat should be sent back to the country they came from even if they are genuine refugees. Only 15% think asylum seekers arriving by boat should not be allowed to stay in Australia but be resettled in another country if they are found to be genuine refugees.

Those more likely to think they should be sent back to the country they came from were Liberal/National voters (36%), aged 55+ (32%) and those that had not completed secondary education (41%).

Those more likely to think they should be allowed to stay in Australia if they are found to be genuine refugees were Greens voters (72%), Labor voters (52%) and those with university education (55%).

Too soft or too tough on asylum seekers

Q. Do you think the Federal Liberal/National Government is too tough or too soft on asylum seekers or is it taking the right approach?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other	Oct 10	Jul 12
Too tough	22%	37%	3%	68%	16%	7%	12%
Too soft	25%	23%	23%	14%	41%	63%	60%
Taking the right approach	35%	19%	61%	5%	25%	18%	11%
Don't know	18%	21%	13%	13%	18%	12%	17%

25% think the Government is too soft on asylum seekers, 22% think they are too tough and 35% think they are taking the right approach.

Since this question was last asked in July 2012, those thinking the Government are too tough has increased from 12% to 22% - while too soft has declined from 60% to 25% and taking the right approach increased from 11% to 35%.

Those most likely to think they are taking the right approach were Liberal/National voters (61%) and aged 55+ (47%).

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?

	Nov 09	Dec 10	Jun 11	Oct 12	Oct 13	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other
Climate change is happening and is caused by human activity	53%	45%	50%	48%	52%	51%	70%	29%	80%	46%
We are just witnessing a normal fluctuation in the earth's climate	34%	36%	39%	39%	36%	39%	22%	61%	10%	41%
Don't know	13%	19%	12%	13%	12%	11%	8%	10%	10%	12%

51% agree that climate change is happening and is caused by human activity and 39% believe that we may just be witnessing a normal fluctuation in the earth's climate. This is a similar result to when this question was previously asked in October last year.

By age groups, those aged under 35 split 55%/32% and those aged 55+ split 43%/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 59%/29%.

Extreme temperatures

Q. Do you think the recent extreme temperatures across Australia are likely or unlikely to be related to climate change?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other
Likely to be related to climate change	52%	72%	33%	73%	52%
Unlikely to be related to climate change	34%	18%	54%	12%	38%
Don't know	13%	10%	13%	16%	10%

52% think that the recent extreme temperatures across Australia are likely to be related to climate change - 34% think they are unlikely to be related to climate change.

57% of those with university education believe they are related. 48% of those aged 55+ think they are not related.

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.