

The Essential Report

2 December 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 28th November to 1st December 2014 and is based on 1,001 respondents.

Aside from the standard question on voting intention, this week's report includes questions on balance of power in the Senate, Tony Abbott's election promises, attributes of the party leaders, Government legislation in the Senate and defence forces pay.

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 = 1,761 respondents

First preference/leaning to	Election 7 Sep 13	4 weeks ago 4/11/14	2 weeks ago 18/11/14	Last week 25/11/14	This week 2/12/14
Liberal		37%	37%	38%	37%
National		3%	3%	3%	3%
Total Liberal/National	45.6%	40%	40%	40%	40%
Labor	33.4%	38%	38%	39%	40%
Greens	8.6%	10%	10%	10%	9%
Palmer United Party	5.5%	4%	3%	3%	3%
Other/Independent	6.9%	8%	9%	8%	8%

2 Party Preferred	Election 7 Sep 13	4 weeks ago 4/11/14	2 weeks ago 18/11/14	Last week 25/11/14	This week 2/12/14
Liberal National	53.5%	48%	48%	48%	47%
Labor	46.5%	52%	52%	52%	53%

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.

Balance of power in the Senate

Q. The balance of power in the Senate is now held by micro parties such as Palmer United Party, Family First, Liberal Democrats, Motor Enthusiasts Party and independents. Is this good or bad for democracy?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote Other
Good for democracy	37%	49%	23%	54%	58%
Bad for democracy	29%	19%	50%	20%	15%
Makes no difference	18%	18%	16%	10%	22%
Don't know	17%	13%	12%	16%	5%

37% said that having the balance of power in the Senate held by micro parties is good for democracy and 29% think it is bad.

A majority of Greens and other voters think it is good while 50% of Liberal/National voters think it is bad.

When a similar question about PUP holding the balance of power was asked in July, results were similar - 36% thought it was good and 28% bad.

Election promises

Q. In response to claims that he has broken election promises, the Prime Minister said he has 'fundamentally kept faith with the Australian people'. Do you agree or disagree?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote Other
Total agree	31%	12%	66%	3%	25%
Total disagree	56%	82%	21%	92%	71%
Strongly agree	8%	5%	15%	1%	4%
Agree	23%	7%	51%	2%	21%
Disagree	22%	23%	18%	33%	31%
Strongly disagree	34%	59%	3%	59%	40%
Don't know	13%	6%	13%	4%	3%

56% disagree that Tony Abbott has “fundamentally kept faith with the Australian people” and 31% agree.

While two thirds of Liberal/National voters agree, the vast majority of Labor (82%), Greens (92%) and other voters (71%) disagree.

Leader Attributes – Tony Abbott

Q. Which of the following describe your opinion of the Prime Minister, Tony Abbott?

	2 Sep 13 (as Opposition leader)	29 Oct 13	27 May 14	Total 2 Dec	Change
Out of touch with ordinary people	52%	51%	67%	66%	-1
Hard working	71%	67%	57%	62%	+5
Arrogant	52%	54%	63%	61%	-2
Narrow-minded	55%	54%	61%	61%	-
Superficial	48%	49%	57%	54%	-3
Intolerant	47%	49%	55%	53%	-2
Erratic	43%	43%	51%	52%	+1
Intelligent	63%	62%	52%	51%	-1
Aggressive	47%	46%	52%	49%	-3
A capable leader	46%	52%	41%	43%	+2
Good in a crisis	39%	45%	35%	42%	+7
Understands the problems facing Australia	46%	51%	42%	40%	-2
More honest than most politicians	34%	39%	30%	30%	-
Trustworthy	38%	40%	29%	30%	+1
Visionary	35%	33%	31%	27%	-4

Tony Abbott's key attributes were out of touch with ordinary people (66%), hard working (62%), arrogant (61%) and narrow-minded (61%).

Since May, the largest shifts have been for good in a crisis (+7), hard working (+5) and visionary (-4).

Leader Attributes – Bill Shorten

Q. Which of the following describe your opinion of the Opposition Leader, Bill Shorten?

	29 Oct 13	27 May 14	Total 2 Dec	Change
Intelligent	69%	66%	66%	-
Hard working	65%	66%	64%	-2
Understands the problems facing Australia	50%	53%	53%	-
A capable leader	49%	51%	46%	-5
Superficial	37%	42%	41%	-1
Out of touch with ordinary people	42%	39%	40%	+1
Good in a crisis	40%	40%	38%	-2
Narrow-minded	31%	35%	36%	+1
Arrogant	35%	36%	35%	-1
Trustworthy	34%	36%	34%	-2
Visionary	33%	30%	30%	-
Erratic	30%	32%	30%	-2
More honest than most politicians	27%	32%	29%	-3
Aggressive	31%	32%	29%	-3
Intolerant	30%	29%	27%	-2

Bill Shorten's key attributes were intelligent (66%), hard working (64%), understands the problems facing Australia (53%) and a capable leader (46%).

Since May, the largest shift has been for a capable leader (-5).

Leader Attributes – Comparisons

	Abbott	Shorten	Difference
Out of touch with ordinary people	66%	40%	+26
Arrogant	61%	35%	+26
Intolerant	53%	27%	+26
Narrow-minded	61%	36%	+25
Erratic	52%	30%	+22
Aggressive	49%	29%	+20
Superficial	54%	41%	+13
Good in a crisis	42%	38%	+4
More honest than most politicians	30%	29%	+1
Hard-working	62%	64%	-2
Visionary	27%	30%	-3
A capable leader	43%	46%	-3
Trustworthy	30%	34%	-4
Understands the problems facing Australia	40%	53%	-13
Intelligent	51%	66%	-15

Compared to Bill Shorten, Tony Abbott is much more likely to be considered out of touch with ordinary people (+26), arrogant (+26), intolerant (+26) and narrow minded (+25).

Bill Shorten is regarded by more respondents to be intelligent (-15) and understands the problems facing Australia (-13).

Government legislation

Q. Some of the Government's legislation has not yet been passed by Parliament. Do you think the Senate should vote for or against the following legislation?

	Vote for	Vote against	Don't know	Vote for legislation			
				Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote Other
A six-month waiting period for those under-30 before they can access the dole (Newstart)	39%	48%	13%	29%	59%	14%	34%
Lower the Renewable Energy Target	26%	51%	23%	17%	43%	4%	18%
Deregulation of university fees	23%	56%	21%	14%	39%	9%	24%
Paid Parental Leave on 6 months' full pay	30%	57%	13%	30%	28%	32%	27%
Cut public funding for university courses by 20%	20%	65%	14%	10%	37%	3%	22%
\$7 Medicare co-payment for all visits to the GP.	24%	68%	8%	9%	45%	12%	29%
Increase in fuel tax (fuel excise indexation)	18%	72%	10%	14%	25%	23%	17%

Respondents were more likely to think the Senate should vote against all listed outstanding legislation.

The strongest opposition was to increasing the fuel excise (72%), the \$7 Medicare co-payment (68%) and cuts to university funding (65%).

The only legislation which was supported by a majority of Liberal/National voters was a six-month waiting period for those under-30 before they can access the dole (59% for/27% against). A majority of Liberal/National voters thought the Senate should vote against increasing the fuel excise (66%) and the paid parental leave scheme (62%).

Defence forces pay increase

Q. Australia's defence forces have been awarded a 1.5% annual pay increase for the next three years. Do you think this pay increase is fair or unfair?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote Other	Work full time	Work part time	No increase	Increase up to 1.5%	Increase more than 1.5%
Total fair	42%	37%	50%	42%	39%	45%	38%	50%	55%	34%
Total unfair	47%	52%	43%	33%	56%	45%	44%	37%	38%	61%
Very fair	11%	9%	12%	8%	16%	12%	9%	15%	13%	5%
Fair	31%	28%	38%	34%	23%	33%	29%	35%	42%	29%
Unfair	28%	25%	31%	30%	37%	26%	33%	24%	26%	37%
Very unfair	19%	27%	13%	3%	19%	19%	11%	13%	12%	24%
Don't know	12%	11%	6%	25%	5%	10%	17%	14%	7%	5%

42% think the 1.5% pay increase awarded to the defence forces is fair and 47% think it is unfair.

A majority of Labor voters (52%) and other voters (56%) think it is unfair.

A majority of workers who said they had received no pay increase or an increase of 1.5% or less in the last 12 months thought the defence forces pay increase was fair while 61% of those who had received a pay increase greater than 1.5% thought it was unfair.

Pay increase in last 12 months

Q. Over the past 12 months, how much has your pay increased? (based on 542 full-time and part-time employees)

	Total	Work full time	Work part time
No increase	39%	35%	45%
1% or less	12%	10%	15%
About 1.5%	8%	8%	7%
About 2%	12%	15%	8%
About 3%	10%	12%	7%
4-5%	5%	6%	2%
6-10%	2%	3%	1%
More than 10%	1%	2%	*
Don't know	11%	8%	16%

A majority of workers (51%) say they have received a pay increase of less than 1.5% in the last 12 months. 30% say they have received an increase of more than 1.5%.

45% of full-time workers say they have received an increase less than 1.5% compared to 60% of part-time workers.

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.