

The Essential Report

10 February 2015





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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 6th to 9th February and is based on 1,007 respondents.

Aside from the standard question on voting intention, this week's report includes questions on party leaders, the Government's paid parental leave scheme, same sex marriage, data retention and privatisation.

The methodology used to carry out this research is described in the appendix on page 14.

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 = 1,780 respondents

First preference/leaning to	Election 7 Sep 13	2 weeks ago 27/1/15	Last week 3/2/15	This week 10/2/15
Liberal		36%	35%	36%
National		3%	3%	3%
Total Liberal/National	45.6%	39%	38%	39%
Labor	33.4%	41%	41%	41%
Greens	8.6%	9%	9%	10%
Palmer United Party	5.5%	2%	3%	3%
Other/Independent	6.9%	9%	9%	8%

2 Party Preferred	Election 7 Sep 13	2 weeks ago 27/1/15	Last week 3/2/15	This week 10/2/15
Liberal National	53.5%	46%	46%	46%
Labor	46.5%	54%	54%	54%

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.

Approval of Tony Abbott

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

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote Other	Sep 2013	Mar 2014	June 2014	Sep 2014	Dec 2014	Jan 2015
Total approve	29%	7%	65%	9%	20%	41%	40%	35%	35%	32%	37%
Total disapprove	62%	89%	29%	86%	71%	36%	47%	58%	52%	55%	53%
Strongly approve	7%	1%	16%	6%	2%	14%	11%	10%	9%	8%	9%
Approve	22%	6%	49%	3%	18%	27%	29%	25%	26%	24%	28%
Disapprove	26%	24%	25%	23%	37%	13%	20%	18%	22%	22%	23%
Strongly disapprove	36%	65%	4%	63%	34%	23%	27%	40%	30%	33%	30%
Don't know	9%	4%	6%	5%	9%	23%	12%	7%	13%	12%	10%

62% of respondents disapprove of the job Tony Abbott is doing as Prime Minister – up 9% since the last time this question was asked in January - and 29% approve of the job Tony Abbott is doing (down 8%). This represents a change in net rating from -16 to -33 – his worst since becoming leader of the Liberal Party.

65% (down 18%) of Liberal/National voters approve of Tony Abbott's performance, with 29% (up 19%) disapproving. 89% of Labor voters and 86% of Greens voters disapprove of Tony Abbott's performance.

By gender men were 34% approve/61% disapprove and women 24% approve/64% disapprove.

Approval of Bill Shorten

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

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote Other	Nov 2013	Mar 2014	June 2014	Sep 2014	Dec 2014	Jan 2015
Total approve	33%	64%	15%	36%	15%	31%	32%	38%	35%	35%	39%
Total disapprove	38%	12%	66%	24%	58%	27%	39%	40%	36%	39%	33%
Strongly approve	8%	19%	1%	4%	3%	5%	4%	7%	5%	7%	7%
Approve	25%	45%	14%	32%	12%	26%	28%	31%	30%	28%	32%
Disapprove	21%	10%	30%	19%	36%	17%	24%	22%	22%	23%	19%
Strongly disapprove	17%	2%	36%	5%	22%	10%	15%	18%	14%	16%	14%
Don't know	29%	24%	19%	41%	27%	43%	29%	22%	29%	26%	28%

33% (down 6% since January) of respondents approve of the job Bill Shorten is doing as opposition leader and 38% (up 5%) disapprove - for a net rating of -5 (down 11%).

64% (down 4%) of Labor voters approve of the job Bill Shorten is doing and 12% (no change) disapprove.

38% of men and 29% of women approve of Bill Shorten. 43% of men and 34% of women disapprove.

Better Prime Minister

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

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote Other	Oct 2013	Mar 2014	June 2014	Sep 2014	Dec 2014	Jan 2015
Tony Abbott	31%	5%	75%	4%	22%	41%	39%	36%	35%	31%	35%
Bill Shorten	39%	78%	6%	59%	24%	22%	33%	40%	36%	36%	37%
Don't know	30%	18%	18%	36%	55%	37%	28%	24%	30%	33%	28%

31% (down 4% since January) of respondents think Tony Abbott would make the better Prime Minister and 39% (up 2%) think Bill Shorten would make the better Prime Minister.

34% of men prefer Tony Abbott and 41% prefer Bill Shorten - and women prefer Bill Shorten 38% to 28%.

Paid parental leave

Q. Tony Abbott recently announced that the Government will not proceed with their proposed paid parental leave scheme. Do you approve or disapprove of the Government dropping their paid parental leave scheme?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote Other
Total approve	59%	55%	73%	46%	69%
Total disapprove	25%	29%	16%	29%	20%
Strongly approve	31%	33%	35%	22%	43%
Approve	28%	22%	38%	24%	26%
Disapprove	14%	15%	10%	10%	12%
Strongly disapprove	11%	14%	6%	19%	8%
Don't know	17%	16%	10%	24%	10%

59% approve of the Government dropping their paid parental leave scheme and 25% disapprove.

A majority of both Labor voters (55%) and Liberal/National voters (73%) approve.

83% of those aged 55+ approve while younger respondents were divided – for those aged 18-34, 38% approve and 40% disapprove.

Same sex marriage

Q. Do you think people of the same sex should or should not be allowed to marry?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other	Nov 2010	Jul 2011	Sep 2012	Oct 2013	Jun 2014	Dec 2014
Should be allowed to marry	59%	69%	48%	90%	48%	53%	54%	55%	57%	60%	55%
Should not be allowed to marry	28%	21%	40%	7%	41%	36%	35%	36%	31%	28%	32%
Don't know	13%	10%	12%	3%	11%	11%	11%	9%	12%	12%	14%

59% agreed that people of the same sex should be allowed to marry and 28% think they should not. This is an increase in support since this question was previously asked in December.

Support for same sex marriage is 50% among men but 68% among women. 67% of under 35's support same sex marriage - compared to 43% of those aged 65+.

Voting for same sex marriage

Q. If a political party or candidate supported same-sex marriage would you be more likely to vote for them, less likely to vote for them or does it make no difference to your vote?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote Other
More likely to vote for them	26%	32%	13%	67%	25%
Less likely to vote for them	19%	13%	28%	1%	38%
Makes no difference	48%	50%	54%	31%	35%
Don't know	6%	5%	5%	1%	2%

26% say they would be more likely to vote for a candidate/party that supported same sex marriage, 19% say they would be less likely and 48% say it would make no difference to their vote.

Those more likely include women (32%), aged 18-34 (42%) and university educated (34%).

Those less likely include men (26%) and aged 65+ (31%).

Same sex marriage laws

Q. Regardless of your opinion about same-sex marriage, do you think it is likely or unlikely that the laws will be changed in the next few years to allow same-sex marriage?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote Other
Total likely	56%	59%	52%	70%	47%
Total unlikely	28%	28%	33%	22%	37%
Very likely	15%	19%	13%	21%	11%
Likely	41%	40%	39%	49%	36%
Unlikely	22%	22%	26%	19%	27%
Very unlikely	6%	6%	7%	3%	10%
Don't know	16%	13%	14%	8%	16%

56% think it is likely that the laws will be changed in the next few years to allow same-sex marriage and 28% think it is unlikely.

There was little difference between across groups on this question.

Opinion of retaining personal information

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

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote Other	Aug 2014	Nov 2014
Governments having access to personal telephone and internet information is necessary to protect society from terrorist or criminal actions.	38%	29%	57%	16%	42%	37%	41%
Governments are increasingly using the argument about terrorism to collect and store personal data and information, and this is a dangerous direction for society	44%	55%	26%	71%	48%	49%	44%
Don't know	18%	15%	16%	13%	10%	13%	15%

Opinions were divided between the two statements. 38% agreed more that “Governments having access to personal telephone and internet information is necessary to protect society from terrorist or criminal actions” and 44% agreed more that “Governments are increasingly using the argument about terrorism to collect and store personal data and information, and this is a dangerous direction for society”

Since this question was asked in November there has been a slight shift away from agreeing that “Governments having access to personal telephone and internet information is necessary to protect society from terrorist or criminal actions” - from 41% to 38%.

Privatisation

Q. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about privatisation of Government-owned assets like electricity, water, rail, ports, etc?

	Total agree	Total disagree	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Selling off public utilities to private companies will help the economy	25%	53%	4%	21%	28%	25%	22%
Selling Government assets frees up money to reallocate to other services and infrastructure	38%	44%	5%	33%	27%	17%	18%
Privatisation mainly benefits the corporate sector	70%	13%	29%	41%	10%	3%	17%
Utilities like water and power suppliers are too important to be sold off	72%	13%	40%	32%	10%	3%	14%
Private companies can run public utilities more efficiently than Governments	36%	39%	7%	29%	24%	15%	24%
Privatisation means more competition which benefits consumers	33%	49%	6%	27%	29%	20%	19%
Private companies deliver better quality services than Government-run organisations	33%	46%	6%	27%	29%	17%	22%
Prices always increase more when services are privatised	70%	13%	34%	36%	11%	2%	16%

There was strongest agreement with the statements “Utilities like water and power suppliers are too important to be sold off” (72%), “Privatisation mainly benefits the corporate sector” (70%) and “Prices always increase more when services are privatised” (70%).

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.