

The Essential Report

13 January 2020



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Prepared By: Essential Research

Data Supplied by:



AMSRS 

Our researchers are members of the Australian Market and Social Research Society.



About this poll

This report summarises the results of a fortnightly omnibus conducted by Essential Research with data provided by Qualtrics. The survey was conducted online from 7th January 2020 to 11th January 2020 and is based on 1,081 respondents.

This week's report includes questions about performance of party leaders and preferred Prime Minister, attributes of Scott Morrison and questions around the bushfires.

The methodology used to carry out this research is described in the appendix at the end of the report.

Note that due to rounding, not all tables necessarily total 100% and subtotals may also vary.



Performance of Scott Morrison

Q Do you approve or disapprove of the job Scott Morrison is doing as Prime Minister?

	Jan'20	Dec'19	Nov'19	Oct'19	Sep'19	Aug'19	Jul'19
NET: Approve	40%	45%	45%	47%	49%	48%	48%
NET: Disapprove	52%	43%	41%	38%	36%	37%	34%
Don't know	8%	13%	13%	15%	15%	16%	18%
Base (n)	1,081	1,035	1,075	1,088	1,093	1,096	1,091

	Total	Federal Voting Intention			
		Labor	Coalition	Greens	NET: Other
Strongly approve	11%	4%	25%	4%	5%
Approve	28%	12%	54%	16%	23%
Disapprove	20%	26%	11%	22%	25%
Strongly disapprove	32%	52%	6%	51%	38%
Don't know	8%	7%	4%	7%	10%
NET: Approve	40%	16%	79%	20%	28%
NET: Disapprove	52%	77%	17%	73%	63%
Base (n)	1,081	349	372	106	148



- The Prime Minister's approval rating has decreased from 45% last year to 40% this year.
- 52% disapprove of his performance in January, up from 43%. This has been driven by an increase those who strongly disapprove – up from 22% in December to 32%.
- The PM's approval rating among Coalition voters remains consistent with 79% approval (on par with 82% approval last month).
- He has lost approval among Labor voters, among whom strongly disapprove has increased from 36% in December to 52%.



Performance of Anthony Albanese

Q Do you approve or disapprove of the job Anthony Albanese is doing as Opposition Leader?

	Jan'20	Dec'19	Nov'19	Oct'19	Sep'19	Aug'19	Jul'19
NET: Approve	43%	39%	37%	40%	36%	38%	39%
NET: Disapprove	30%	28%	34%	29%	31%	29%	24%
Don't know	27%	33%	29%	31%	33%	33%	37%
Base (n)	1,081	1,035	1,075	1,088	1,093	1,096	1,091

	Total	Federal Voting Intention			
		Labor	Coalition	Greens	NET: Other
Strongly approve	8%	16%	4%	8%	2%
Approve	35%	48%	31%	34%	25%
Disapprove	21%	11%	29%	16%	27%
Strongly disapprove	10%	2%	17%	4%	15%
Don't know	27%	22%	19%	39%	30%
NET: Approve	43%	64%	35%	41%	27%
NET: Disapprove	30%	13%	46%	20%	43%
Base (n)	1,081	349	372	106	148



- Approval for Albanese has remained steady heading into 2020, moving from 39% to 43% between December and January.
- His approval from within his voter base (64% among Labor voters) is not as strong as Scott Morrison (79% among Coalition voters).
- Those who don't know about Albanese's performance is now 27%, the lowest since he became the Labor leader.



Preferred Prime Minister

Q Who do you think would makes the better Prime Minister out of Scott Morrison and Anthony Albanese?

	Jan'20	Nov'19	Oct'19	Sep'19	Aug'19	Jul'19	Jun'19
Scott Morrison	36%	44%	43%	46%	44%	44%	43%
Anthony Albanese	39%	28%	28%	25%	28%	26%	25%
Don't know	25%	29%	29%	29%	28%	31%	32%
Base (n)	1,081	1,075	1,088	1,093	1,096	1,091	1,099

- For the first time since becoming leader of the Labor party, more people consider Anthony Albanese more capable of being PM than Scott Morrison. 39% think Albanese would be the better PM, compared to 36% for Morrison.
- A 6pt drop from November for Morrison has coincided with an 11pt increase for Albanese.
- A quarter (25%) don't know who would make the better PM between the two.

Leader attributes – Scott Morrison

Q Which of the following describe your opinion of the Prime Minister, Scott Morrison?

	Total	Change (Oct'19)	Oct'19	Dec'18
Out of touch with ordinary people	62%	+6	56%	54%
Intelligent	58%	-6	64%	61%
Narrow-minded	54%	+7	47%	46%
Hard-working	53%	-10	63%	60%
Superficial	51%	+3	48%	45%
Arrogant	51%	+7	44%	43%
A capable leader	45%	-9	54%	49%
Intolerant	43%	+2	41%	37%
Understands the problems facing Australia	42%	-8	50%	46%
Trustworthy	40%	-3	43%	39%
More honest than most politicians	39%	-5	44%	39%
Erratic	38%	+4	34%	36%
Aggressive	32%	-5	37%	34%
Good in a crisis	32%	-19	51%	41%
Visionary	30%	-12	42%	38%
Base (n)	1,081		1,088	1,026



- The attributes mainly associated with Scott Morrison are out of touch with ordinary Australians (62%), intelligent (58%) and narrow-minded (54%).
- Since October last year, Scott Morrison is more likely to be seen as narrow-minded (now 54%, from 47% in October), arrogant (now 51%, from 44%) and out of touch with ordinary Australians (now 62%, from 56%)
- In the same time, he is less likely to be seen as good in a crisis (down 19pts from 51% to 32%), a visionary (from 42% to 30%), hard-working (now 63% from 53%) and a capable leader (down 9pts from 54% to 45%).



Leadership during bushfires

Q Do you approve or disapprove of Scott Morrison/Gladys Berejiklian/Daniel Andrews’s handling of the bushfire crisis?

	NET: Approve	NET: Disapprove	Strongly approve	Approve	Disapprove	Strongly disapprove	Don't know
Scott Morrison (Asked in all states, n=1,081)	32%	57%	8%	24%	21%	36%	11%
Gladys Berejiklian (Asked in NSW only, n=333)	55%	22%	14%	43%	14%	9%	22%
Daniel Andrews (Asked in VIC only, n=275)	58%	20%	14%	44%	13%	7%	22%

NET: APPROVE	Total	Labor	Federal Voting Intention Coalition	NET: Other
Scott Morrison (Asked in all states, n=1,081)	32%	11%	64%	23%
Gladys Berejiklian	55%	54%	71%	40%

(Asked in NSW only, n=333)				
Daniel Andrews (Asked in VIC only, n=333)	58%	67%	63%	37%

- Around a third (32%) of people approve of Scott Morrison’s handing of the current bushfires crisis, with just 8% strongly approving of his performance. 36% strongly disapprove of his performance.
- Comparatively, state premiers Berejiklian and Andrews have performed well, with over half of people in each state approving of their handling of the crisis (55% in NSW and 58% in Victoria).
- The majority of Scott Morrison’s approval is coming from within his own supporter base, with 64% of intended Coalition voters approving of his performance during the crisis. Just 11% of Labor voters and 23% of those voting for another party approve of his performance.



Bushfires Statements

Q To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the current bushfire season in Australia?

	NET: Agree	NET: Disagree	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
The Prime Minister should have met with experts before the fire season to plan a coordinated response to the risk	79%	13%	57%	22%	9%	4%	8%
The Federal Government was underprepared for the risk of bushfires this season	78%	14%	54%	24%	9%	5%	8%
When there are emergencies, politicians should get out of the way and let the experts do their job	77%	7%	44%	34%	12%	4%	7%
The Prime Minister is right to say Australia has always had bushfires like these	42%	52%	16%	25%	25%	27%	7%

- 78% of people agree that the Federal Government was underprepared for the risk of bushfires this season.
- Around half (52%) disagree with the Prime Minister that Australia has always had bushfires like these.



Appendix: Household income definitions*

NET: Lower Income	Up to \$51,999 per year Total of all wages/salaries, government benefits, pensions, allowances and other income that your household usually receives (GROSS – before tax and superannuation deductions)
NET: Mid Income	\$52,000 to \$103,999 per year Total of all wages/salaries, government benefits, pensions, allowances and other income that your household usually receives (GROSS – before tax and superannuation deductions)
NET: High Income	More than \$104,000 per year Total of all wages/salaries, government benefits, pensions, allowances and other income that your household usually receives (GROSS – before tax and superannuation deductions)

Appendix: Methodology, margin of error and professional standards

The data gathered for this report is gathered from a fortnightly online omnibus conducted by Qualtrics.

Every two weeks, the team at Essential considers 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 current media and social issues.

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 online omnibus is live from the Wednesday night and closed on the following Sunday. Incentives are offered to participants. 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 staff hold Australian Market and Social Research Society (AMSRS) membership and are bound by professional codes of behaviour.

