

The Essential Report

10 February 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 6th February 2020 to 9th February 2020 and is based on 1,056 respondents.

This week's report includes questions about party leader approval, preferred Prime Minister, government 2019-2020 budget promises, attitudes towards the Deputy Leader of the National's resignation, Coronavirus and dietary preferences.

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?

	Feb'20	Jan'20	Dec'19	Nov'19	Oct'19	Sep'19	Aug'19	Jul'19
NET: Approve	39%	40%	45%	45%	47%	49%	48%	48%
NET: Disapprove	52%	52%	43%	41%	38%	36%	37%	34%
Don't know	9%	8%	13%	13%	15%	15%	16%	18%
Base (n)	1,056	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	10%	3%	24%	1%	8%
Approve	28%	16%	54%	9%	17%
Disapprove	24%	33%	12%	25%	28%
Strongly disapprove	28%	40%	5%	60%	36%
Don't know	9%	8%	5%	5%	11%
NET: Approve	39%	19%	78%	10%	25%
NET: Disapprove	52%	74%	17%	84%	64%
Base (n)	1,056	354	320	113	155



- The Prime Minister's approval rating is at 39%. It has not recovered following the fall from 45% at the end of last year to 40% in January.
- Still 52% disapprove of his performance, which shows no change from January (52%).
- However, the PM's approval rating among Coalition voters remains high, 78% approval (79% in Jan'20).



Performance of Anthony Albanese

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

	Feb'20	Jan'20	Dec'19	Nov'19	Oct'19	Sep'19	Aug'19	Jul'19
NET: Approve	41%	43%	39%	37%	40%	36%	38%	39%
NET: Disapprove	31%	30%	28%	34%	29%	31%	29%	24%
Don't know	28%	27%	33%	29%	31%	33%	33%	37%
Base (n)	1,056	1,081	1,035	1,075	1,088	1,093	1,096	1,091

	Total	Labor	Federal Voting Intention		NET: Other
			Coalition	Greens	
Strongly approve	6%	12%	4%	3%	2%
Approve	35%	51%	34%	27%	17%
Disapprove	22%	12%	30%	27%	28%
Strongly disapprove	9%	2%	15%	6%	20%
Don't know	28%	24%	18%	37%	32%
NET: Approve	41%	62%	37%	30%	20%
NET: Disapprove	31%	14%	45%	33%	49%
Base (n)	1,056	354	320	113	155



- Approval for Albanese has remained steady at 41% (43% last month). Those who don't know about Albanese's performance remains relatively high, at 28%.
- His approval within his voter base (62% among Labor voters) is still not as strong as Scott Morrison (78% among Coalition voters).



Preferred Prime Minister

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

	Feb'20	Jan'20	Nov'19	Oct'19	Sep'19	Aug'19	Jul'19	Jun'19
Scott Morrison	36%	36%	44%	43%	46%	44%	44%	43%
Anthony Albanese	36%	39%	28%	28%	25%	28%	26%	25%
Don't know	28%	25%	29%	29%	29%	28%	31%	32%
Base (n)	1,056	1,081	1,075	1,088	1,093	1,096	1,091	1,099

	Total	Labor	Federal Voting Intention Coalition	Greens	NET: Other
Scott Morrison	36%	14%	77%	5%	31%
Anthony Albanese	36%	64%	12%	58%	24%
Don't know	28%	23%	11%	37%	45%
Base (n)	1,056	354	320	113	155

- Scott Morrison and Anthony Albanese are considered equally capable of being Prime Minister (both 36%).
- 28% are unsure who would make the better PM.



Returning to budget surplus

Q Before the 2019 Federal election, the Government promised the 2019-2020 budget would return to surplus. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about achieving a budget surplus?

	NET: Agree	NET: Disagree	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
It's more important to spend money on bushfire recovery than fund the surplus	79%	11%	50%	30%	7%	5%	9%
It's understandable with the coronavirus impacting trade with China that the surplus won't be achieved	65%	18%	25%	40%	12%	6%	17%
The government was wrong to announce the budget 'was back in the black' before the last election	57%	24%	25%	32%	17%	7%	19%

- Four in five (79%) agree that it's more important to spend money on bushfire recovery than fund the surplus; 65% agree that it's understandable with the coronavirus impacting trade on China that the surplus won't be achieved; and over half (57%) agree that the government was wrong to announce the budget 'was back in the black' before the last election.
- Coalition voters are least likely to agree that the government was wrong to announce the budget 'was back in the black' before the last election (44%); while Labor (70%) and Greens (68%) voters are most likely to agree.

Attitude to Bridget McKenzie’s resignation and grant allocation

Q The Deputy Leader of the Nationals has resigned for having a conflict of interest in awarding a grant to a shooting club of which she was a member. Which of the following statements do you agree with?

	NET: Agree	NET: Disagree	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
The investigation needs to continue to investigate any MP involved in the allocation of sports grants	70%	17%	70%	17%	11%	6%	13%
Giving grants to sports organisations in marginal seats was only done to influence the election result in the Governments favour	66%	16%	36%	30%	12%	5%	18%
The minister’s resignation should be the end of the matter	49%	38%	24%	26%	20%	18%	13%

NET: Agree	Federal Voting Intention				
	Total	Labor	Coalition	Greens	NET: Other
The investigation needs to continue to investigate any MP involved in the allocation of sports grants	70%	77%	65%	81%	71%
Giving grants to sports organisations in marginal seats was only done to influence the election result in the Governments favour	66%	76%	56%	70%	73%
The minister's resignation should be the end of the matter	49%	44%	61%	44%	44%
Base (n)	1,056	354	320	113	155

- 70% of participants agree that the investigation into the Deputy Nationals Leader needs to continue to investigate any MP involved in the allocation of sports grants. Half (49%) of participants agree that the minister's resignation should be the end of the matter.
- Coalition voters are more likely to agree that the minister's resignation should be the end of the matter (61%) than all other voters (44%).
- Additionally, Coalition voters are least likely to agree that the investigation needs to continue (65%) and giving grants to sports organisations in marginal seats was only done to influence the election result in the Governments favour (56%), than all other voters (76% and 74%).



Coronavirus concerns and government actions

Q To what extent are you concerned about the threat of the Coronavirus in Australia?

	Total
Very concerned	25%
Quite concerned	43%
Not that concerned	26%
Not at all concerned	6%
Base (n)	1,056

Q Do you think the Government is doing enough to protect Australians from the threat of Coronavirus?

	Total	Age 18-34	Age 35-54	Age 55+	Labor	Federal Voting Intention Coalition	Greens	NET: Other
Government is doing enough	49%	43%	45%	57%	43%	68%	34%	37%
Government is not doing enough	30%	38%	35%	19%	38%	16%	38%	40%
Don't know	21%	19%	20%	24%	19%	15%	28%	23%
Base (n)	1,056	341	366	349	354	320	113	155

- 25% are very concerned about the threat of the Coronavirus to Australia and 43% are quite concerned. 26% are not at all concerned and 6% say they are not at all concerned.
- 49% of participants believe the government is doing enough to protect Australians from Coronavirus; those over 55 years old (57%) and Coalition voters (68%) are most likely to say that the Government is doing enough.
- Those aged 18-54 year old (37%), with dependent children (35%), Greens voters (38%) and other/independent party voters (40%) are more likely to believe that the government isn't doing enough.



Attitudes towards Coronavirus management

Q To what extent do you support or oppose the following measures to limit the spread of the Coronavirus to Australia?

	NET: Agree	NET: Disagree	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
Stopping all flights to and from China until more is known about the disease	85%	10%	59%	25%	8%	2%	5%
Stopping anyone from entering the country who has who has been to China in the last 14 days	84%	11%	59%	25%	8%	3%	5%
People entering Australia from affected areas in China will be quarantined on Christmas Island for 14 days	82%	12%	59%	23%	8%	4%	6%

	NET: Agree	Age				Federal Voting Intention		
		Total	18-34	35-54	55+	Labor	Coalition	Greens
Stopping all flights to and from China until more is known about the disease	85%	77%	83%	92%	84%	91%	72%	82%
Stopping anyone from entering the country who has who has been to China in the last 14 days	84%	76%	84%	90%	84%	90%	71%	86%
People entering Australia from affected areas in China will be quarantined on Christmas Island for 14 days	82%	73%	82%	90%	79%	92%	67%	83%
Base (n)	1,056	341	366	349	354	320	113	155

- More than four-fifths of participants agree with each of the three measures to limit to the spread of the Coronavirus; stopping all flights to and from China has 85% agreement, stopping anyone entering the country who has been to China in the last 14 days has 84% agreement, and 82% agree that people entering Australia from affected areas in China should be quarantined.
- Participants over 55 years old and Coalition voters are more likely to agree with these measures, than participants 18-34 and Greens voters.



Dietary preferences

Q Which, if any, of the following best describes your diet?

	Total	18-34	Age			Labor	Federal Voting Intention		
			35-54	55+	Coalition		Greens	NET: Other	
Vegan	3%	7%	2%	1%	3%	3%	7%	1%	
Vegetarian	5%	8%	6%	1%	5%	3%	12%	4%	
Pescatarian	5%	7%	5%	3%	5%	3%	7%	7%	
Flexitarian/Semi-vegetarian	7%	8%	8%	6%	9%	7%	7%	5%	
I try to limit my meat consumption	24%	22%	25%	26%	27%	19%	32%	22%	
None of the above	56%	48%	55%	64%	50%	64%	34%	62%	
Base (n)	1,056	341	366	349	354	320	113	155	

- 44% of participants are reducing their meat consumption in some way, most commonly by trying to limit their meat consumption (24%).
- 18-34 year olds are more likely to be vegan (7%) or vegetarian (8%) than those aged over 55 (both 1%).
- 12% of Greens voters are vegetarian, compared to 4% of all other voters.

Reasons for dietary preferences

Q And which, if any, of the following are reasons why you choose to follow this diet?

	Total	18-34	Age 35-54	55+
Improve or maintain personal health	51%	40%	50%	65%
Limit processed food, additives or chemicals in diet	32%	21%	36%	40%
Assist with weight loss	29%	29%	27%	32%
Environmental reasons	29%	34%	27%	24%
Ethical reasons of animal welfare	27%	34%	27%	18%
Reduce the cost of food bills	25%	18%	25%	35%
Dislike the taste of meat	11%	13%	13%	7%
Manage an illness (e.g. diabetes)	8%	7%	10%	8%
I have food allergies	7%	9%	7%	4%
Religious beliefs and teachings	4%	6%	5%	0%
None of the above	4%	4%	4%	5%
Base (n)	470	177	166	127

- The most commonly selected reason for choosing to follow a meat restrictive diet is to improve or maintain personal health (51%), followed by limiting processed food, additives or chemicals in diet (32%), assist with weight loss and environmental reasons (both 29%).
- 25% of participants are chose to follow a meat restrictive diet in order to reduce the cost of food bills while 11% dislike the taste of meat.
- Participants over 55 are more likely to say 'improve or maintain personal health' (65%), 'limit processed food, additives or chemicals in diet' (40%) or 'reduce the cost of food bills' (35%), than those 18-34 years old (40%, 21% and 18% respectively).



- Women are more likely than men to say they dislike the taste of meat (15% women, 7% men).
- Greens voters are more likely to say environmental (54%) or ethical (45%) reasons than any other political group (both 24%).



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.

