

# The Essential Report

24 February 2020



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**Prepared By:** Essential Research

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**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 20<sup>th</sup> February 2020 to 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2020 and is based on 1,090 respondents.

This week's report includes questions about coal-power generation, zero-emissions target for 2050, volunteering, Coronavirus and attitudes towards mobile phone etiquette.

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.

## Government support for coal-fired power plants

Q Which of the following statements regarding the future of coal is closest to your view?

|   | Total        | Federal Voting Intention (Lower House) |           |        |            |
|---|--------------|--|-----------|--------|------------|
|   |              | Labor                                  | Coalition | Greens | NET: Other |
| The government should be working to shut down mines and coal-fired power plants as soon as possible   | <b>32%</b>   | 36%                                    | 21%       | 62%    | 27%        |
| The government should let the coal mining industry and coal-fired power plants continue operating as long as they are profitable, but not subsidise them or support the expansion of the industry | <b>47%</b>   | 45%                                    | 52%       | 28%    | 50%        |
| The government should subsidise coal-fired power plants to keep them going and provide financial support for new mines and other projects in the coal industry                                    | <b>21%</b>   | 19%                                    | 27%       | 10%    | 22%        |
| Base (n)  | <b>1,090</b> | 336                                    | 390       | 104    | 146        |

- 47% of participants say that letting the coal mining industry and coal-fired power plants continue operating as long as they are profitable, but not subsidise them or support the expansion of the industry is closest to their view.
- A third (32%) say working to shut down mines and coal-fired power plants as soon as possible is closest to their view, with Greens voters most likely to select that option (62%).
- Coalition voters are most likely to say subsidising coal-fired power plants to keep them going and provide financial support for new mines and other projects in the coal industry, is closest to their view (27%).



## Attitudes towards coal

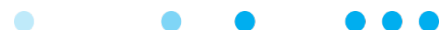
Q To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about coal?

|   | NET: Agree | NET: Disagree | Strongly agree | Somewhat agree | Somewhat disagree | Strongly disagree | Unsure |
|---|------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------|
| Improvements in renewable energy will mean that burning coal to generate electricity will become less necessary                               | 75%        | 14%           | 43%            | 32%            | 8%                | 6%                | 11%    |
| Advances in technology and international action on climate change will mean coal becomes uneconomical to extract in the future                | 65%        | 18%           | 28%            | 36%            | 12%               | 6%                | 17%    |
| If we're serious about dealing with climate change, Australia needs to get out of coal as soon as possible                                    | 64%        | 24%           | 34%            | 29%            | 13%               | 11%               | 13%    |
| Even if Australia stops exporting coal for electricity generation, it should still export coal for steel production                           | 61%        | 19%           | 26%            | 36%            | 12%               | 7%                | 20%    |
| Rather than digging it all up now, Australia should leave its coal resources in the ground to use when it becomes more valuable in the future | 53%        | 29%           | 21%            | 33%            | 20%               | 8%                | 18%    |



| NET: Agree  | Age          |       |       |     | Federal Voting Intention (Lower House) |           |        |            |
|---|--------------|-------|-------|-----|--|-----------|--------|------------|
|   | Total        | 18-34 | 35-54 | 55+ | Labor                                  | Coalition | Greens | NET: Other |
| Improvements in renewable energy will mean that burning coal to generate electricity will become less necessary                               | <b>75%</b>   | 80%   | 76%   | 70% | 82%                                    | 70%       | 83%    | 68%        |
| Advances in technology and international action on climate change will mean coal becomes uneconomical to extract in the future                | <b>65%</b>   | 74%   | 61%   | 61% | 73%                                    | 60%       | 70%    | 53%        |
| If we're serious about dealing with climate change, Australia needs to get out of coal as soon as possible                                    | <b>64%</b>   | 75%   | 65%   | 52% | 72%                                    | 54%       | 87%    | 49%        |
| Even if Australia stops exporting coal for electricity generation, it should still export coal for steel production                           | <b>61%</b>   | 61%   | 64%   | 59% | 60%                                    | 72%       | 38%    | 59%        |
| Rather than digging it all up now, Australia should leave its coal resources in the ground to use when it becomes more valuable in the future | <b>53%</b>   | 64%   | 53%   | 44% | 57%                                    | 50%       | 56%    | 45%        |
| Base (n)  | <b>1,090</b> | 341   | 374   | 375 | 336                                    | 390       | 104    | 146        |

- Three-quarters of participants (75%) agree that improvements in renewable energy will mean that burning coal to generate electricity will become less necessary, 65% agree that advances in technology and international action on climate change will mean coal becomes uneconomical to extract in the future and 64% agree if we're serious about dealing with climate change, Australia needs to get out of coal as soon as possible.
- Participants aged 18-34, those with a university education and Greens or Labor voters are more likely to agree with these statements than those over 55, those with a secondary school education and Coalition or other voters (other minor party or independent candidate).
- Coalition voters are most likely to agree that even if Australia stops exporting coal for electricity generation, it should still export coal for steel production (72%), compared to 38% of Greens voters.
- Capital city residents are more likely to agree if we're serious about dealing with climate change, Australia needs to get out of coal as soon as possible (67%) and rather than digging it all up now, Australia should leave its coal resources in the ground to use when it becomes more valuable in the future (56%); than non-capital city residents (56% and 47% respectively).



## Support for zero-carbon pollution target for 2050

Q To what extent would you support or oppose setting a zero-carbon pollution target for 2050 if it were adopted by the Federal Government?

|                  | Federal Voting Intention (Lower House) |       |           |        |            | Jan'20 |
|------------------|--|-------|-----------|--------|------------|--------|
|                  | Total                                  | Labor | Coalition | Greens | NET: Other |        |
| Strongly support | <b>31%</b>                             | 38%   | 22%       | 59%    | 19%        | 32%    |
| Somewhat support | <b>44%</b>                             | 42%   | 46%       | 33%    | 44%        | 39%    |
| Somewhat oppose  | <b>15%</b>                             | 13%   | 17%       | 6%     | 17%        | 18%    |
| Strongly oppose  | <b>11%</b>                             | 7%    | 15%       | 2%     | 20%        | 12%    |
| NET: Support     | <b>75%</b>                             | 80%   | 68%       | 91%    | 63%        | 71%    |
| NET: Oppose      | <b>25%</b>                             | 20%   | 32%       | 9%     | 37%        | 29%    |
| Base (n)         | <b>1,090</b>                           | 336   | 390       | 104    | 146        | 1,080  |

- 75% of participants support setting a zero-carbon pollution target for 2050 if it were adopted by the Federal Government, up from 71% in January.
- The majority of all party voter support the introduction of targets. 91% of Greens voters, 80% of Labor and 68% of Coalition party voters all support the introduction of targets.
- Women (79%), capital city residents (77%) and Greens voters (91%) are most likely to support this initiative.
- Men (70%), non-capital city residents (70%) and independent/other party voters (63%) are least likely to support this initiative.



## Type of volunteering engaged with

Q Which, if any, of the following types of organisations do you currently volunteer for?

|  | Age          |       |       |     | Employment Status  |                        |         |
|--|--------------|-------|-------|-----|--------------------|------------------------|---------|
|  | Total        | 18-34 | 35-54 | 55+ | In paid employment | Not in paid employment | Retired |
| Organisations providing support services, such as volunteer fire services, animal rescue and other charities | <b>16%</b>   | 25%   | 11%   | 12% | 18%                | 10%                    | 13%     |
| Sports clubs or arts-based organisations   | <b>14%</b>   | 22%   | 10%   | 10% | 17%                | 10%                    | 9%      |
| Volunteer organisations linked with schools (e.g. reading support)   | <b>11%</b>   | 16%   | 13%   | 5%  | 16%                | 6%                     | 5%      |
| Organisations promoting causes, such as environmental groups, political campaigns                            | <b>10%</b>   | 18%   | 9%    | 5%  | 14%                | 6%                     | 6%      |
| Church or faith-based organisations  | <b>9%</b>    | 11%   | 9%    | 8%  | 10%                | 7%                     | 9%      |
| Community organisations, such as Scouts or historical societies  | <b>9%</b>    | 14%   | 5%    | 7%  | 10%                | 6%                     | 10%     |
| None of these  | <b>59%</b>   | 44%   | 64%   | 66% | 53%                | 71%                    | 62%     |
| Base (n)   | <b>1,090</b> | 341   | 374   | 375 | 592                | 243                    | 222     |

- 41% of participants volunteer at one of the listed organisations – with organisations providing support services (16%) most frequently selected.
- 18-34 year olds, university educated and participants working in paid employment are more likely to volunteer for any listed organisation.
- Capital city residents and those with dependent children are more likely to volunteer at an organisation linked with schools (13% and 18% respectively) or promoting causes (12% and 14%) than non-capital city residents (both 7%) and those without dependent children (7% and 8%).
- Greens voters are most likely to volunteer for an organisation providing support services (27%).





## Support for Government initiatives for volunteers

Q People have suggested a number of things the government could do to encourage people to volunteer more. How strongly do you support or oppose each of the following?

|  | NET:<br>Support | NET:<br>Oppose | Strongly<br>support | Somewhat<br>support | Neither<br>support nor<br>oppose | Somewhat<br>oppose | Strongly<br>oppose |
|--|-----------------|----------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Allow volunteers to claim travel and other expenses from volunteering as tax deductions        | <b>69%</b>      | <b>10%</b>     | 29%                 | 40%                 | 21%                              | 6%                 | 4%                 |
| The government reimburses volunteers directly for any out of pocket expenses from volunteering | <b>60%</b>      | <b>14%</b>     | 25%                 | 35%                 | 25%                              | 9%                 | 5%                 |
| Give companies tax breaks when they allow their staff to take time off to do volunteer work    | <b>58%</b>      | <b>11%</b>     | 20%                 | 38%                 | 31%                              | 7%                 | 4%                 |

- 69% of participants support allowing volunteers to claim travel and other expenses from volunteering as tax deductions, 60% support the government directly reimbursing volunteers for any out of pocket expenses from volunteering and 58% support giving companies tax breaks when they allow their staff to take time off to do volunteer work.
- Greens voters are most likely to support giving companies tax breaks when they allow their staff to take time off to do volunteer work (70%) whereas, independent/other party voters are least likely to support that suggestion (47%).



## Actions taken since Coronavirus outbreak

Q Since the outbreak of the coronavirus, do any of the following statements apply to you?

|  | Age   |       |       |     |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-----|
|  | Total | 18-34 | 35-54 | 55+ |
| I have stayed away from cities or town centres | 20%   | 27%   | 22%   | 13% |
| I have avoided going to restaurants            | 20%   | 26%   | 23%   | 11% |
| I have stayed away from shopping centres       | 17%   | 23%   | 19%   | 9%  |
| I have cancelled an overseas trip              | 15%   | 26%   | 16%   | 4%  |
| None of these                                  | 70%   | 57%   | 66%   | 84% |
| Base (n)                                       | 1,090 | 341   | 374   | 375 |

- 30% of participants have changed their behaviour in some way listed – with 20% saying they have either stayed away from cities or town centres, or avoided going to restaurants.
- 18-34 year olds (43%), university educated (39%), capital city residents (34%) and those with dependent children (36%) are most likely to report changing their behaviour since the Coronavirus outbreak.
- Whereas 55+ year olds (16%), those with a secondary school education (20%), non-capital residents (23%) and participants without dependent children (27%) are least likely to report behavioural changes.

## Attitudes towards border protection and Coronavirus

Q To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the Coronavirus?

|   | NET: Agree | NET: Disagree | Strongly agree | Somewhat agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Because of global movements in people we are more vulnerable to the spread of viruses like this           | 81%        | 5%            | 43%            | 38%            | 14%                        | 3%                | 2%                |
| The Australian government has been right to prevent people from mainland China entering Australia         | 80%        | 6%            | 53%            | 27%            | 14%                        | 4%                | 3%                |
| The government and the media have done a good job in keeping the public informed about the virus          | 62%        | 15%           | 22%            | 40%            | 23%                        | 10%               | 5%                |
| The border with China should be kept open to keep money from tourism and students coming into the country | 20%        | 54%           | 6%             | 14%            | 26%                        | 22%               | 32%               |

|   | NET: Agree | Age   |       |       |     | Federal Voting Intention (Lower House) |           |        |            |
|---|------------|-------|-------|-------|-----|--|-----------|--------|------------|
|   |            | Total | 18-34 | 35-54 | 55+ | Labor                                  | Coalition | Greens | NET: Other |
| Because of global movements in people we are more vulnerable to the spread of viruses like this           | 81%        | 70%   | 82%   | 90%   | 80% | 86%                                    | 76%       | 84%    |            |
| The Australian government has been right to prevent people from mainland China entering Australia         | 80%        | 71%   | 80%   | 88%   | 79% | 88%                                    | 66%       | 82%    |            |
| The government and the media have done a good job in keeping the public informed about the virus          | 62%        | 53%   | 59%   | 73%   | 61% | 73%                                    | 49%       | 53%    |            |
| The border with China should be kept open to keep money from tourism and students coming into the country | 20%        | 28%   | 20%   | 13%   | 21% | 21%                                    | 22%       | 13%    |            |
| Base (n)  | 1,090      | 341   | 374   | 375   | 336 | 390                                    | 104       | 146    |            |



- Four out of five participants agree that because of global movements in people we are more vulnerable to the spread of viruses like this (81%) or the Australian government has been right to prevent people from mainland China entering Australia (80%).
- Three in five agree the government and the media have done a good job in keeping the public informed about the virus (62%); but only one in five agree that the border with China should be kept open to keep money from tourism and students coming into the country (20%).
- Participants over 55 years old (90%, 88% and 73% agreement respectively) and Liberal voters (86%, 88% and 73%) are more likely to agree with the top three statements.
- Capital residents are more likely to agree that government and the media have done a good job in keeping the public informed about the virus than those in non-capital cities (65% compared to 57%).
- Men, 18-34 year olds and participants with a university education are more likely to agree that the border with China should be kept open to keep money from tourism and students coming into the country (24%, 28%, 29% respectively); than women, participants over 55 or with a secondary school education (16%, 13%, 12% respectively).



## Attitudes towards mobile phone etiquette

Q How appropriate are the following examples of mobile phone etiquette?

|   | NET:<br>Appropriate | NET:<br>Inappropriate | Always<br>appropriate | Usually<br>appropriate | Sometimes<br>appropriate | Rarely<br>appropriate | Never<br>appropriate |
|---|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Having video calls in public place (e.g. cafe or public transport)                      | 13%                 | 64%                   | 4%                    | 9%                     | 23%                      | 28%                   | 36%                  |
| Texting or watching movies while walking along the street                               | 12%                 | 69%                   | 4%                    | 8%                     | 19%                      | 23%                   | 46%                  |
| Checking messages while in a conversation with another person                           | 10%                 | 69%                   | 4%                    | 6%                     | 21%                      | 28%                   | 41%                  |
| Having phone conversations on speaker in a public place (e.g. cafe or public transport) | 10%                 | 73%                   | 4%                    | 7%                     | 16%                      | 23%                   | 50%                  |
| Using speakers rather than headphones in public   | 10%                 | 77%                   | 4%                    | 6%                     | 13%                      | 25%                   | 52%                  |

| NET: Inappropriate  | Gender |      |        | Age   |       |     |
|---|--------|------|--------|-------|-------|-----|
|   | Total  | Male | Female | 18-34 | 35-54 | 55+ |
| Having video calls in public place (e.g. cafe or public transport)                      | 64%    | 59%  | 69%    | 43%   | 60%   | 86% |
| Texting or watching movies while walking along the street                               | 69%    | 64%  | 74%    | 48%   | 67%   | 90% |
| Checking messages while in a conversation with another person                           | 69%    | 63%  | 75%    | 51%   | 66%   | 88% |
| Having phone conversations on speaker in a public place (e.g. cafe or public transport) | 73%    | 68%  | 78%    | 60%   | 70%   | 87% |
| Using speakers rather than headphones in public   | 77%    | 74%  | 80%    | 67%   | 77%   | 86% |
| Base (n)  | 1,090  | 539  | 551    | 341   | 374   | 375 |



- Over half of people (52%) say it's never appropriate to use speakers, rather than headphones in public, with another quarter (25%) saying it's rarely appropriate.
- Having a video call is seen to be the least inappropriate activity (36%), but still just 4% say this activity was always appropriate and 9% say it is usually appropriate.
- Women and people over 55 years old are more likely to say each of the activities is never appropriate compared to men and those aged 18-34.
- Non-capital city residents are more likely to say that having video calls in public place (43%), checking messages while in a conversation with another person (48%), and texting or watching movies while walking along the street (53%) are 'never appropriate' than their capital city compatriots (32%, 38% and 43% respectively).
- However not using headphones (either for calls or using media) is just as inappropriate for capital and non-capital residents.



## Appendix: Household income definitions\*

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| NET: Lower Income | Up to \$51,999 per year<br>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<br>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<br>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.

