

# The Essential Report

10 March 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 5<sup>th</sup> March 2020 to 8<sup>th</sup> March 2020 and is based on 1,096 respondents.

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?

	Mar'20	Feb'20	Jan'20	Dec'19	Nov'19	Oct'19	Sep'19	Aug'19	Jul'19
NET: Approve	<b>41%</b>	39%	40%	45%	45%	47%	49%	48%	48%
NET: Disapprove	<b>49%</b>	52%	52%	43%	41%	38%	36%	37%	34%
Don't know	<b>10%</b>	9%	8%	13%	13%	15%	15%	16%	18%
Base (n)	<b>1,096</b>	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	<b>11%</b>	4%	23%	1%	9%
Approve	<b>31%</b>	15%	54%	14%	29%
Disapprove	<b>23%</b>	31%	16%	23%	26%
Strongly disapprove	<b>26%</b>	44%	3%	56%	30%
Don't know	<b>10%</b>	7%	4%	5%	7%
<b>NET: Approve</b>	<b>41%</b>	19%	77%	16%	38%
<b>NET: Disapprove</b>	<b>49%</b>	75%	19%	79%	55%
Base (n)	<b>1,096</b>	347	359	92	171

- The Prime Minister's approval rating is now at 41% and still has not recovered following the fall from 45% at the end of last year.



- Now 49% disapprove of his performance, which shows no change from January (52%).
- However, the PM's approval rating among Coalition voters remains high, 77% approval (78% in Feb'20).



## Performance of Anthony Albanese

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

	Mar'20	Feb'20	Jan'20	Dec'19	Nov'19	Oct'19	Sep'19	Aug'19	Jul'19
NET: Approve	<b>41%</b>	41%	43%	39%	37%	40%	36%	38%	39%
NET: Disapprove	<b>33%</b>	31%	30%	28%	34%	29%	31%	29%	24%
Don't know	<b>26%</b>	28%	27%	33%	29%	31%	33%	33%	37%
Base (n)	<b>1,096</b>	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	8%	16%	4%	7%	7%
Approve	33%	48%	30%	33%	19%
Disapprove	22%	14%	30%	29%	25%
Strongly disapprove	10%	2%	19%	5%	16%
Don't know	26%	20%	17%	26%	33%
<b>NET: Approve</b>	<b>41%</b>	64%	34%	40%	26%
<b>NET: Disapprove</b>	<b>33%</b>	16%	49%	33%	41%
Base (n)	<b>1,096</b>	347	359	92	171

- The Opposition Leader's approval rating is also at 41%, on par with the results from Jan'20 (43%).



- A third of participants (33%) disapprove of Albanese's performance which is up from Dec'19 (28%).
- Albanese's approval among Labor voters remains relatively low at 64%, compared to Morrison's approval among Coalition voters (77%).



## Preferred Prime Minister

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

	Mar'20	Feb'20	Jan'20	Nov'19	Oct'19	Sep'19	Aug'19	Jul'19	Jun'19
Scott Morrison	<b>40%</b>	36%	36%	44%	43%	46%	44%	44%	43%
Anthony Albanese	<b>35%</b>	36%	39%	28%	28%	25%	28%	26%	25%
Don't know	<b>25%</b>	28%	25%	29%	29%	29%	28%	31%	32%
Base (n)	<b>1,096</b>	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	<b>40%</b>	13%	78%	15%	38%
Anthony Albanese	<b>35%</b>	66%	11%	58%	23%
Don't know	<b>25%</b>	21%	12%	27%	39%
Base (n)	<b>1,096</b>	347	359	92	171

- 40% of participants believe that Scott Morrison would make a better PM than Anthony Albanese (35%).
- Three-quarters (78%) of Coalition voters prefer Morrison whereas 66% of Labor voters prefer Albanese.
- A quarter (25%) of participants don't know who would make the better PM.





## Most Important Issues

Q Which of the following issues are the most important for the Federal Government to address over the next 12 months?

	Total	Change (Oct'19)	Oct'19
Improve the health system	<b>38%</b>	+6	32%
Create jobs and reduce unemployment	<b>31%</b>	-5	36%
Protection of the environment	<b>29%</b>	+2	27%
Reduce utility bills	<b>23%</b>	-4	27%
Promote renewable energy	<b>22%</b>	+3	19%
Improve wages and working conditions	<b>21%</b>	-3	24%
Limit the amount of migration to Australia	<b>20%</b>	+1	19%
Increase housing affordability	<b>19%</b>	-	19%
Crack-down on tax avoidance by big companies	<b>17%</b>	+1	16%
Maintain strong border protection	<b>15%</b>	+3	12%
Provide tax cuts	<b>13%</b>	-2	15%
Ensure the security of energy supply	<b>11%</b>	-2	13%
Combat domestic crime	<b>11%</b>	+1	10%
Provide more money for education	<b>10%</b>	-1	11%
Combat international crime and terrorism	<b>7%</b>	-1	8%
Increase the budget surplus	<b>6%</b>	-	6%
Improve conditions for refugees and asylum seekers	<b>5%</b>	-1	6%
Base (n)	<b>1,096</b>	-	1,088

- The top three most important issues for the Federal Government to address over the next 12 months are improving the health system (38%), creating jobs and reducing unemployment (31%) and protecting the environment (29%).



- Improving the health system (now 38%, was 32%) is ahead of creating jobs and reducing unemployment (now 31%, was 36%) compared to October '19.
- Reducing utility bills is also less important now (23%) than it was in October '19 (27%).



## Better at managing the economy

Q Which party do you think is better at managing:

	Coalition	Labor	Neither	Difference (Coalition minus Labor)
The economy to benefit big business	53%	22%	26%	<b>+31</b>
The economy generally	40%	31%	29%	<b>+9</b>
The economy to benefit small business	36%	35%	29%	<b>+1</b>
The economy to benefit older Australians	32%	35%	33%	<b>-3</b>
The economy to benefit people living in regional communities	29%	35%	37%	<b>-6</b>
The economy to benefit workers	26%	46%	28%	<b>-20</b>

- The Coalition is perceived to be better at managing the economy to benefit big business (53%) and managing the economy generally (40%) than Labor (22% and 31% respectively).
- Labor is seen as better at managing the economy for workers (46%) than the Coalition (26%).
- Between a quarter (26%) and a third (37%) of participants believe that neither Coalition nor Labor is better at managing any economic elements.

## Better at managing major events

Q And which party do you think is better at managing:

	Coalition	Labor	Neither	Difference (Coalition minus Labor)
A major security threat	39%	27%	34%	<b>+12</b>
The ageing population	35%	27%	38%	<b>+8</b>
A global economic crisis	35%	30%	36%	<b>+5</b>
A major health risk	34%	29%	37%	<b>+5</b>
A major environmental crisis	28%	32%	39%	<b>-4</b>
The transition from a carbon-based to a renewable based energy market	25%	37%	38%	<b>-12</b>

- The Coalition is seen as better at managing a major security threat (39%) and the ageing population (35%) than Labor (both 27%).
- Whereas Labor is perceived to be better at managing the transition from a carbon-based to a renewable based energy market (37%), compared to 25% Coalition.



## Coronavirus concerns

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

	Mar'20	Feb'20	Difference
Very concerned	<b>27%</b>	25%	+2
Quite concerned	<b>36%</b>	43%	-7
Not that concerned	<b>28%</b>	26%	+2
Not at all concerned	<b>9%</b>	6%	+3
Base (n)	<b>1,096</b>	1,057	-

- Net concern about the threat of Coronavirus has decreased overall with 36% of participants now 'quite concerned', down from 43% in Feb'20.
- 9% of participants are now 'not at all concerned' about Coronavirus, up from 6% last month.

## Likelihood of developing Coronavirus

Q How likely do you think it is, that you will develop Coronavirus?

	Total	Age group			Federal Voting Intention			
		18-34	35-54	55+	Labor	Coalition	Greens	NET: Other
Very likely	7%	11%	9%	2%	6%	7%	6%	10%
Somewhat likely	24%	25%	27%	21%	27%	26%	18%	21%
Somewhat unlikely	43%	35%	42%	49%	40%	48%	37%	38%
Very unlikely	26%	29%	22%	27%	27%	19%	38%	31%
Base (n)	<b>1,096</b>	341	370	385	347	359	92	171

- Overall, two-thirds (68%) of participants think it's unlikely that they will develop Coronavirus.
- Especially those over 55 years old (77%) tend to believe it's unlikely they will develop Coronavirus.
- Greens voters tend to believe it's very unlikely they will develop Coronavirus (38%) compared to all other voters (24%).



## Government spending on energy sources

Q To what extent would you support or oppose the Government spending taxpayers' money to research the following energy sources?

	NET: Support	NET: Oppose	Strongly support	Somewhat support	Neither support nor oppose	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose
Renewables (such as large-scale solar or wind farms)	<b>71%</b>	<b>12%</b>	45%	27%	16%	7%	5%
Hydrogen technology	<b>57%</b>	<b>10%</b>	24%	33%	32%	7%	3%
Clean coal	<b>50%</b>	<b>23%</b>	20%	29%	28%	11%	11%
Nuclear	<b>38%</b>	<b>35%</b>	17%	21%	27%	15%	20%

NET: Support	Total	Gender		Age Group			Federal Voting Intention			Location		
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Labor	Coalition	Greens	NET: Other	Capital City	Non-Capital City
Renewables (such as large-scale solar or wind farms)	<b>71%</b>	71%	72%	74%	69%	72%	78%	66%	95%	63%	74%	67%
Hydrogen technology	<b>57%</b>	65%	51%	53%	52%	66%	58%	61%	63%	54%	59%	53%
Clean coal	<b>50%</b>	50%	50%	49%	44%	56%	43%	64%	28%	48%	51%	47%
Nuclear	<b>38%</b>	47%	30%	32%	34%	47%	34%	50%	25%	37%	39%	36%

- 71% of participants support the Government spending taxpayers' money to research renewables, compared to 50% support for clean coal.
- Support for research into renewables is higher in capital cities (74%) than non-capital cities (67%), and higher among Greens voters (95%) than all other voters (63%).
- Coalition voters are most likely to support research into clean coal (64%) and nuclear power (50%) whereas Greens voters are least likely to support those energy sources (28% and 25% respectively).



- Men tend to support research into hydrogen technology (65%) and nuclear (47%) more than women (51% and 30% respectively).
- Participants over 55 years are more likely to support research into hydrogen technology (66%), clean coal (56%) or nuclear (47%) than those aged 18-54 (52%, 46% and 33% respectively).





## Attitude to Bridget McKenzie’s resignation and grant allocation

Q The Deputy Leader of the Nationals resigned last month for having a conflict of interest in awarding a grant to a shooting club of which she was a member. There are ongoing questions about the extent to which other ministers knew and participated in the allocation of regional sporting grants.

	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	71%	16%	42%	28%	10%	6%	13%
The minister’s resignation should be the end of the matter	43%	42%	19%	24%	21%	21%	14%

NET: Agree	Mar’20	Feb’20	Difference
The investigation needs to continue to investigate any MP involved in the allocation of sports grants	71%	70%	+1
The minister’s resignation should be the end of the matter	43%	49%	-6
Base (n)	1,096	1,057	-

- 71% of participants agree that the investigation needs to continue to investigate any MP involved in the allocation of sports grants, which is no different to the Feb’20 results.
- On the other hand, now 43% of participants agree that the minister’s resignation should be the end of the matter (43%) down 6pts from Feb’20.



## 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.