

# The Essential Report

25 May 2020



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**Date:** 25/05/2020

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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 21<sup>st</sup> May to 24<sup>th</sup> May 2020 and is based on 1,087 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.

## Coronavirus concerns

Q To what extent are you concerned about the threat of Covid-19 (coronavirus) in Australia?

	25/05	18/05	11/05	04/05	27/04	20/04	13/04	06/04	29/03	22/03	09/03
Very concerned	<b>30%</b>	33%	34%	32%	39%	44%	45%	51%	53%	39%	27%
Quite concerned	<b>49%</b>	47%	49%	46%	44%	43%	43%	37%	35%	43%	36%
Not that concerned	<b>16%</b>	16%	14%	18%	13%	11%	9%	10%	10%	14%	28%
Not at all concerned	<b>5%</b>	4%	3%	4%	3%	2%	3%	2%	3%	4%	9%
Base (n)	<b>1,087</b>	1,073	1,067	1,093	1,054	1,051	1,068	1,069	1,086	1,034	1,096

	Total	Age group			Location	
		18-34	35-54	55+	Capital	Non-Capital
Very concerned	<b>30%</b>	29%	33%	28%	32%	26%
Quite concerned	<b>49%</b>	49%	49%	49%	49%	48%
Not that concerned	<b>16%</b>	18%	14%	17%	15%	20%
Not at all concerned	<b>5%</b>	4%	4%	6%	4%	7%
Base (n)	<b>1,087</b>	341	364	382	738	349



## Likelihood of developing Coronavirus

Q How likely do you think it is, that you will develop Covid-19?

	25/05	18/05	11/05	04/05	27/04	20/04	13/04	06/04	29/03	22/03
Very likely	5%	6%	6%	5%	5%	7%	5%	8%	8%	8%
Somewhat likely	22%	25%	24%	26%	21%	25%	28%	33%	36%	34%
Somewhat unlikely	51%	48%	48%	46%	50%	52%	49%	45%	45%	45%
Very unlikely	23%	21%	21%	23%	23%	17%	18%	14%	12%	13%
Base (n)	1,087	1,073	1,067	1,093	1,054	1,051	1,068	1,069	1,086	1,034

	Total	Age group			Location	
		18-34	35-54	55+	Capital	Non-Capital
Very likely	5%	8%	6%	2%	7%	2%
Somewhat likely	22%	22%	27%	16%	23%	20%
Somewhat unlikely	51%	45%	46%	59%	50%	53%
Very unlikely	23%	25%	21%	23%	21%	25%
Base (n)	1,087	341	364	382	738	349



## Government response to Covid-19

Q Overall, how would you rate the Government's response to the Covid-19 outbreak?

	25/05	18/05	11/05	04/05	27/04	20/04	13/04	06/04	29/03
Very poor	4%	3%	4%	4%	4%	5%	6%	6%	11%
Quite poor	6%	7%	9%	9%	9%	10%	12%	15%	21%
Neither good, nor poor	16%	17%	16%	20%	17%	21%	20%	21%	24%
Quite good	43%	41%	39%	38%	44%	42%	40%	37%	34%
Very good	30%	32%	32%	28%	26%	23%	23%	21%	11%
TOTAL: Poor	11%	11%	13%	14%	13%	15%	17%	21%	31%
TOTAL: Good	73%	73%	71%	66%	70%	65%	63%	58%	45%
Base (n)	1,087	1,073	1,067	1,093	1,054	1,051	1,068	1,069	1,086

	Total	Gender		Age Group			Location	
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Capital	Non-Capital
Very poor	4%	6%	3%	7%	4%	3%	4%	6%
Quite poor	6%	8%	4%	8%	7%	3%	6%	6%
Neither good, nor poor	16%	16%	16%	21%	16%	13%	16%	18%
Quite good	43%	41%	44%	48%	47%	34%	45%	38%
Very good	30%	28%	32%	16%	26%	47%	29%	33%
TOTAL: Poor	11%	14%	7%	15%	11%	6%	10%	12%
TOTAL: Good	73%	70%	76%	63%	73%	81%	74%	70%
Base (n)	1,087	534	553	341	364	382	738	349



## State Government response to Covid-19

Q How would you rate your state government's response to the Covid-19 outbreak?

	25/05	18/05	11/05	04/05	27/04	20/04	13/04
Very poor	4%	3%	4%	4%	4%	5%	5%
Quite poor	7%	8%	8%	8%	9%	9%	11%
Neither good, nor poor	17%	17%	16%	18%	17%	20%	20%
Quite good	38%	39%	39%	38%	41%	39%	38%
Very good	35%	33%	34%	31%	30%	26%	26%
TOTAL: Poor	11%	11%	12%	12%	13%	14%	16%
TOTAL: Good	73%	72%	73%	70%	70%	66%	64%
Base (n)	1,087	1,073	1,067	1,093	1,054	1,051	1,068

	Total	NSW	VIC	State QLD	SA	WA
Very poor	4%	5%	3%	3%	2%	4%
Quite poor	7%	8%	9%	8%	2%	3%
Neither good, nor poor	17%	22%	16%	15%	12%	10%
Quite good	38%	41%	37%	42%	38%	20%
Very good	35%	24%	36%	32%	46%	63%
TOTAL: Poor	11%	13%	11%	12%	4%	7%
TOTAL: Good	73%	65%	73%	74%	84%	83%
Base (n)	1,087	349	275	220	84	106



## Easing restrictions

Q When do you think governments should start to ease the restrictions on travel and gatherings to allow offices, shops, restaurants, other workplaces, and public spaces to start operating again?

	25/05	18/05	11/05	04/05	27/04	20/04
As soon as possible	14%	9%	13%	10%	10%	9%
Within the next 1 to 2 weeks	10%	13%	12%	9%	7%	6%
Within the next month	23%	23%	22%	21%	18%	14%
By the end of next month	17%	22%	20%	15%	15%	13%
It is too soon to consider easing restrictions	27%	25%	27%	37%	42%	49%
Unsure	9%	8%	6%	8%	8%	10%
Base (n)	1,087	1,073	1,067	1,093	1,054	1,051

	Total	Gender		Age Group		
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+
As soon as possible	14%	18%	10%	17%	12%	14%
Within the next 1 to 2 weeks	10%	11%	10%	12%	9%	10%
Within the next month	23%	24%	23%	24%	22%	23%
By the end of next month	17%	17%	17%	15%	18%	18%
It is too soon to consider easing restrictions	27%	22%	31%	23%	29%	28%
Unsure	9%	8%	9%	9%	10%	7%
Base (n)	1,087	534	553	341	364	382

## Continuation of short-term measures

- Q The Federal Government has introduced some short-term measures to help people financially deal with the Covid-19 outbreak. For each of the following, how long do you think do you think the schemes should continue?

	Should end as soon as possible	Should end at current set date	Should continue after the current end date	Unsure
Providing free childcare for children in early childhood education (Due to end 28 <sup>th</sup> June 2020)	14%	33%	36%	17%
Increase to JobSeeker payments to \$1,115 per fortnight (Due to end 24 <sup>th</sup> September 2020)	21%	28%	36%	15%
Provision of JobKeeper wage subsidy of \$1,500 per fortnight to eligible employers for each eligible worker (Due to end 24 <sup>th</sup> September 2020)	17%	36%	32%	14%

TOTAL: Should continue after the current end date	Total	Gender		Age Group		
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+
Providing free childcare for children in early childhood education	<b>36%</b>	39%	33%	43%	34%	31%
Increase to JobSeeker payments to \$1,115 per fortnight	<b>36%</b>	39%	33%	42%	36%	30%
Provision of JobKeeper wage subsidy of \$1,500 per fortnight to eligible employers for each eligible worker	<b>32%</b>	35%	30%	38%	32%	27%
Base (n)	<b>1,087</b>	534	553	341	364	382

- One-third of participants say that providing feed childcare, and increasing JobSeeker payments should continue after the current end date (both 36%).
- 18-34 year olds are most likely to say any of the short-term measures should continue after the current end date, whereas 55+ year olds are least likely to support continuing these measures.
- Men are more likely to support continuing the increased JobSeeker payments after 24<sup>th</sup> September 2020 (39%) than women (33%).



## Chinese Barley Tariffs

Q Last week the Chinese government imposed tariffs on Australian barley exports, costing farmers millions of dollars through lost revenue. To what extent do you agree or disagree about the following statements about international trade with China?

	NET: Agree	NET: Disagree	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree, nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
The Australian government needs to stand up to the Chinese Government and demand an open inquiry into the origins of Covid-19	<b>66%</b>	<b>9%</b>	44%	22%	14%	5%	4%	11%
The Chinese government imposed the tariffs in response to Australia leading calls for an independent inquiry into the origins of Covid-19	<b>57%</b>	<b>15%</b>	36%	20%	16%	7%	7%	13%
The Australian government needs to do all it can to avoid a trade war with China	<b>53%</b>	<b>17%</b>	28%	25%	19%	11%	7%	11%
Australia should impose tariffs on imports from China in retaliation	<b>48%</b>	<b>22%</b>	27%	21%	19%	14%	7%	12%
Australia should work towards an agreement with China to remove the tariffs on barley, whatever the conditions	<b>47%</b>	<b>23%</b>	20%	27%	19%	12%	11%	11%



NET: Agree	Total	Age Group			Labor	Age Group		
		18-34	35-54	55+		NET: Coalition	Greens	NET: Other
The Australian government needs to stand up to the Chinese Government and demand an open inquiry into the origins of Covid-19	<b>66%</b>	52%	66%	78%	60%	76%	59%	69%
The Chinese government imposed the tariffs in response to Australia leading calls for an independent inquiry into the origins of Covid-19	<b>57%</b>	46%	57%	65%	59%	66%	47%	52%
The Australian government needs to do all it can to avoid a trade war with China	<b>53%</b>	49%	51%	57%	58%	57%	52%	36%
Australia should impose tariffs on imports from China in retaliation	<b>48%</b>	39%	50%	53%	46%	54%	42%	52%
Australia should work towards an agreement with China to remove the tariffs on barley, whatever the conditions	<b>47%</b>	38%	48%	54%	51%	52%	42%	35%
Base (n)	<b>1,087</b>	341	364	382	323	428	100	120

- Two-thirds (66%) of participants agree the Australian government needs to stand up to the Chinese Government and demand an open inquiry into the origins of Covid-19.
- More than half of participants agree the Chinese government imposed the tariffs in response to Australia leading calls for an independent inquiry into the origins of Covid-19 (57%) or the Australian government needs to do all it can to avoid a trade war with China (53%).
- Less than half of participants agree that Australia should impose tariffs on imports from China in retaliation (48%) or Australia should work towards an agreement with China to remove the tariffs on barley, whatever the conditions (47%).
- Coalition voters are most likely to agree that the government needs to stand up to the Chinese Government and demand an open inquiry into the origins of Covid-19 (76%); while Labor (60%) and Greens (59%) voters are less likely to agree.



## Influence of China

Q Thinking about Australia’s relationship with **China**, how do you rate the influence of **China** on each of the following aspects?

	NET: Positive	NET: Negative	Very positive	Somewhat positive	Somewhat negative	Very negative	Unsure
Australia’s defence, military, and national security	25%	51%	9%	17%	27%	24%	24%
Australia’s international trade	28%	58%	7%	22%	26%	31%	14%
Australia’s culture	35%	44%	9%	26%	23%	21%	22%
Australia’s politics	23%	59%	7%	16%	31%	28%	18%
Chinese corporations and businesses operating in Australia	22%	62%	4%	17%	27%	35%	17%

	NET: Positive influence	May’20	Aug’19	Change
Australia’s defence, military, and national security	25%	33%	-8%	
Australia’s international trade	28%	59%	-31%	
Australia’s culture	35%	43%	-8%	
Australia’s politics	23%	30%	-7%	
Chinese corporations and businesses operating in Australia	22%	41%	-19%	
Base	1,087	1,096	-	



NET: Positive influence	Total	Gender		Labor	Age Group		
		Male	Female		NET: Coalition	Greens	NET: Other
Australia's defence, military, and national security	<b>25%</b>	30%	21%	23%	33%	19%	21%
Australia's international trade	<b>28%</b>	34%	23%	28%	31%	30%	24%
Australia's culture	<b>35%</b>	38%	31%	36%	34%	41%	30%
Australia's politics	<b>23%</b>	26%	20%	21%	28%	18%	17%
Chinese corporations and businesses operating in Australia	<b>22%</b>	28%	16%	25%	23%	19%	18%
Base (n)	<b>1,087</b>	534	553	323	428	100	120

- Compared to August 2019, participants are less likely to rate China's influence on Australia as positive – particularly in international trade (down 31%) and Chinese corporations operating in Australia (down 19%).

## Influence of the United States of America

Q Thinking about Australia’s relationship with the **United States of America**, how do you rate the influence of the **United States of America** on each of the following aspects?

	TOTAL: Positive	TOTAL: Negative	Very positive	Somewhat positive	Somewhat negative	Very negative	Unsure
Australia’s defence, military, and national security	54%	25%	15%	39%	17%	8%	20%
Australia’s international trade	48%	34%	11%	36%	23%	11%	19%
Australia’s culture	43%	36%	10%	33%	25%	11%	20%
Australia’s politics	41%	39%	10%	31%	26%	13%	20%
American corporations and businesses operating in Australia	47%	32%	10%	38%	22%	10%	21%

TOTAL: Positive influence	May’20	Aug’19	Change
Australia’s defence, military, and national security	54%	65%	-11%
Australia’s international trade	48%	56%	-8%
Australia’s culture	43%	51%	-8%
Australia’s politics	41%	43%	-2%
American corporations and businesses operating in Australia	47%	57%	-10%
Base	1,087	1,096	-



NET: Positive influence	Total	Gender		Labor	Age Group		
		Male	Female		NET: Coalition	Greens	NET: Other
Australia's defence, military, and national security	<b>54%</b>	60%	49%	48%	67%	36%	58%
Australia's international trade	<b>48%</b>	53%	42%	45%	58%	35%	45%
Australia's culture	<b>43%</b>	49%	38%	42%	52%	28%	47%
Australia's politics	<b>41%</b>	47%	35%	34%	55%	23%	39%
American corporations and businesses operating in Australia	<b>47%</b>	53%	42%	40%	60%	33%	45%
Base (n)	<b>1,087</b>	534	553	323	428	100	120

- Compared to August 2019, participants are less likely to see the United States of America as a positive influence on Australia; with defence and American corporations operating in Australia seeing the largest drop (down 11% and 10%) respectively.
- Coalition voters are more likely to rate America's influence on Australia as positive, than Greens voters.



## Most beneficial country to strengthen our relationship with

Q Given the choice between the United States of America and China, which country do you think it would be most beneficial for Australia strengthen our relationship with?

	Total	Gender		Labor	Age Group		
		Male	Female		NET: Coalition	Greens	NET: Other
United States of America	42%	46%	39%	36%	56%	16%	48%
China	18%	22%	15%	22%	15%	25%	15%
Neither	24%	20%	27%	29%	18%	37%	26%
Don't know	16%	11%	19%	12%	10%	21%	10%
Base (n)	<b>1,087</b>	534	553	323	428	100	120

	May'20	Aug'19	Change
United States of America	42%	38%	4%
China	18%	28%	-10%
Neither	24%	18%	6%
Don't know	16%	15%	1%
Base	1,087	1,096	-

- Now 42% of participants believe it would be more beneficial to strength our relationship with the United States of America (up 4%), but a quarter say we should strengthen our relationship with neither country (24%, up 6%).
- Coalition voters are most likely to say we should strengthen our relationship with America (56%), while Greens voters would prefer to strengthen our relationship with neither country (37%).



## Closer or more distant social connections

Q Since the start of the lockdown restrictions, do you feel closer or more distant from each of the following people in your life?

	My partner	My children	My extended family	My neighbours	My friends	My workmates
I feel closer	36%	35%	18%	13%	13%	11%
It has not affected our relationship	53%	52%	55%	64%	52%	53%
I feel more distant	11%	13%	27%	23%	34%	36%
Base	797	716	964	942	1,012	680

TOTAL: I feel closer	Total	Gender		Age Group		
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+
My partner	<b>36%</b>	36%	36%	49%	36%	24%
My children	<b>35%</b>	32%	38%	50%	41%	22%
My extended family	<b>18%</b>	18%	18%	24%	19%	13%
My neighbours	<b>13%</b>	14%	12%	15%	13%	12%
My friends	<b>13%</b>	13%	14%	19%	11%	11%
My workmates	<b>11%</b>	11%	11%	13%	11%	8%



TOTAL: I feel more distant	Total	Gender		Age Group		
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+
My partner	<b>11%</b>	11%	11%	15%	12%	6%
My children	<b>13%</b>	13%	12%	11%	10%	15%
My extended family	<b>27%</b>	26%	28%	31%	27%	24%
My neighbours	<b>23%</b>	21%	24%	23%	21%	24%
My friends	<b>34%</b>	32%	36%	42%	34%	28%
My workmates	<b>36%</b>	34%	39%	47%	32%	24%

- More than half of participants don't feel closer or more distant to the social connections in their life, varying between 64% for neighbours and 52% for children and friends.
- 18-34 year olds are most likely to say they feel closer to their partner (49%), children (50%) and extended family (24%) – but more distant from their friends (42%) and workmates (47%).
- Participants over 55 are most likely to say their social connections haven't been affected by the lockdown restrictions.



## Appendix: Household income definitions\*

TOTAL: 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)
TOTAL: 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)
TOTAL: 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.

