

The Essential Report

15 June 2020



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Date: 15/06/2020

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 11th to 14th June 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?

	15/06	08/06	01/06	25/05	18/05	11/05	04/05	27/04	20/04	13/04
Very concerned	28%	27%	32%	30%	33%	34%	32%	39%	44%	45%
Quite concerned	45%	48%	49%	49%	47%	49%	46%	44%	43%	43%
Not that concerned	23%	21%	15%	16%	16%	14%	18%	13%	11%	9%
Not at all concerned	4%	5%	4%	5%	4%	3%	4%	3%	2%	3%
Base (n)	1,087	1,073	1,059	1,087	1,073	1,067	1,093	1,054	1,051	1,068

Likelihood of developing Coronavirus

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

	15/06	08/06	01/06	25/05	18/05	11/05	04/05	27/04	20/04	13/04
Very likely	6%	6%	7%	5%	6%	6%	5%	5%	7%	5%
Somewhat likely	19%	22%	23%	22%	25%	24%	26%	21%	25%	28%
Somewhat unlikely	49%	47%	48%	51%	48%	48%	46%	50%	52%	49%
Very unlikely	26%	25%	22%	23%	21%	21%	23%	23%	17%	18%
Base (n)	1,087	1,073	1,059	1,087	1,073	1,067	1,093	1,054	1,051	1,068

Government response to Covid-19

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

	15/06	08/06	01/06	25/05	18/05	11/05	04/05	27/04	20/04	13/04
Very poor	3%	4%	5%	4%	3%	4%	4%	4%	5%	6%
Quite poor	8%	8%	7%	6%	7%	9%	9%	9%	10%	12%
Neither good, nor poor	16%	18%	20%	16%	17%	16%	20%	17%	21%	20%
Quite good	42%	40%	39%	43%	41%	39%	38%	44%	42%	40%
Very good	30%	30%	28%	30%	32%	32%	28%	26%	23%	23%
TOTAL: Poor	11%	12%	12%	11%	11%	13%	14%	13%	15%	17%
TOTAL: Good	72%	70%	68%	73%	73%	71%	66%	70%	65%	63%
Base (n)	1,087	1,073	1,059	1,087	1,073	1,067	1,093	1,054	1,051	1,068

	Total	Gender		Age Group			Location	
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Capital	Non-Capital
Very poor	3%	5%	1%	5%	2%	2%	3%	2%
Quite poor	8%	8%	8%	11%	7%	7%	8%	8%
Neither good, nor poor	16%	17%	16%	26%	15%	9%	17%	15%
Quite good	42%	40%	44%	41%	48%	38%	43%	41%
Very good	30%	30%	31%	17%	28%	44%	29%	34%
TOTAL: Poor	11%	13%	10%	16%	9%	9%	12%	10%
TOTAL: Good	72%	71%	74%	58%	76%	81%	71%	75%
Base (n)	1,087	538	549	341	361	385	741	346



State Government response to Covid-19

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

	15/06	08/06	01/06	25/05	18/05	11/05	04/05	27/04	20/04
Very poor	4%	4%	6%	4%	3%	4%	4%	4%	5%
Quite poor	8%	7%	6%	7%	8%	8%	8%	9%	9%
Neither good, nor poor	17%	17%	20%	17%	17%	16%	18%	17%	20%
Quite good	38%	39%	38%	38%	39%	39%	38%	41%	39%
Very good	33%	32%	30%	35%	33%	34%	31%	30%	26%
TOTAL: Poor	12%	11%	12%	11%	11%	12%	12%	13%	14%
TOTAL: Good	71%	71%	68%	73%	72%	73%	70%	70%	66%
Base (n)	1,087	1,073	1,059	1,087	1,073	1,067	1,093	1,054	1,051

	Total	NSW	VIC	State		
				QLD	SA	WA
Very poor	4%	4%	6%	6%	1%	3%
Quite poor	8%	9%	5%	12%	6%	4%
Neither good, nor poor	17%	22%	13%	15%	17%	17%
Quite good	38%	41%	39%	39%	40%	28%
Very good	33%	24%	36%	28%	36%	49%
TOTAL: Poor	12%	13%	11%	18%	7%	6%
TOTAL: Good	71%	65%	75%	67%	76%	77%
Base (n)	1,087	352	275	217	83	107



Importance of unions

Q How important are unions for Australian working people today?

	June 2020	October 2015	February 2014	December 2013	May 2013	September 2012	March 2012
Very important	24%	26%	27%	22%	21%	16%	19%
Quite important	37%	36%	34%	35%	35%	36%	37%
Not very important	17%	21%	21%	22%	24%	28%	27%
Not at all important	7%	7%	9%	12%	12%	10%	8%
Don't know	16%	11%	8%	9%	8%	10%	9%
TOTAL: Important	60%	62%	61%	57%	56%	52%	56%
TOTAL: Not important	24%	28%	30%	34%	36%	38%	35%
Base (n)	1,087	1,012	1,051	1,063	1,050	1,035	1,043

	Total	Federal Voting intention			
		Labor	Coalition	Greens	TOTAL: Other
Very important	24%	33%	15%	29%	26%
Quite important	37%	40%	35%	41%	35%
Not very important	17%	11%	26%	13%	16%
Not at all important	7%	3%	12%	4%	6%
Don't know	16%	13%	13%	13%	17%
TOTAL: Important	60%	73%	50%	70%	61%
TOTAL: Not important	24%	15%	37%	17%	22%
Base (n)	1,087	334	412	96	140



- 60% of respondents think that unions are very, or quite important for working people. Importance of unions is consistent with 2015 when this measure was last recorded (62% in October 2015). However, there has been an increase since 2012 in the proportion of people saying unions are important, increasing from 52% in September 2012.
- Unions are considered more important by those intending to vote Labor (73%) or Greens (70%) at the next Federal election than those intending to vote for the Coalition (50%).



Perceptions of trade unions

Q To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the role of unions in the workplace?

	TOTAL: Agree	TOTAL: Disagree	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
Unions provide essential services to their members to ensure they are paid appropriately and have safe working environments	74%	11%	34%	40%	8%	3%	15%
A union gives workers more power with employers through a collective voice	74%	12%	34%	40%	9%	3%	15%
Unions provide advice and services to which members would otherwise not have access	70%	13%	30%	40%	10%	3%	17%
Unions are vital to stop businesses taking advantage of their employees	67%	16%	34%	33%	12%	5%	16%
Unions that insist on minimum qualifications and training create a highly-skilled workforce	64%	15%	27%	38%	11%	4%	20%
Unions are too politically biased	62%	19%	30%	31%	12%	7%	19%
Union protection makes it difficult for employers to discipline, terminate or even promote employees	58%	24%	25%	33%	18%	6%	18%
Unions add an unnecessary layer of bureaucracy for businesses	49%	33%	21%	28%	22%	11%	18%
Unions are corrupt	47%	30%	19%	28%	18%	12%	23%
Employment law and regulations mean unions are no longer needed	41%	40%	16%	26%	25%	15%	19%



- There was higher agreement with statements pertaining to positive perceptions of unions than negative. 74% agreed that 'Unions provide essential services to their members to ensure they are paid appropriately and have safe working environments' and 'A union gives workers more power with employers through a collective voice'.
- 62% agreed that 'Unions are too politically biased' and over half (58%) agreed that 'Union protection makes it difficult for employers to discipline, terminate or even promote employees'.



Better or worse off with stronger unions

Q Overall, would workers be better off or worse off if unions in Australia were stronger?

	June 2020	October 2015	February 2014	May 2013	September 2012
A lot better off	18%	17%	21%	14%	13%
A little better off	31%	28%	24%	29%	26%
A little worse off	14%	12%	11%	14%	15%
A lot worse off	10%	14%	16%	15%	15%
Unsure / Makes no difference	27%	30%	28%	26%	30%
TOTAL: Better off	50%	45%	45%	43%	39%
TOTAL: Worse off	24%	26%	27%	29%	30%
Base (n)	1,087	1,012	1,051	1,050	1,035

	Total	Labor	Federal Voting intention		TOTAL: Other
			Coalition	Greens	
A lot better off	18%	24%	12%	20%	22%
A little better off	31%	40%	28%	29%	25%
A little worse off	14%	9%	19%	16%	13%
A lot worse off	10%	7%	15%	8%	10%
Unsure	27%	19%	25%	27%	30%
TOTAL: Important	50%	65%	40%	50%	47%
TOTAL: Not important	24%	16%	34%	24%	23%
Base (n)	1,087	334	412	96	140

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 th June 2020)	May	14%	33%	36%	17%
	June	14%	28%	43%	14%
Increase to JobSeeker payments to \$1,115 per fortnight (Due to end 24 th September 2020)	May	21%	28%	36%	15%
	June	17%	32%	38%	13%
Provision of JobKeeper wage subsidy of \$1,500 per fortnight to eligible employers for each eligible worker (Due to end 24 th September 2020)	May	17%	36%	32%	14%
	June	14%	40%	34%	13%



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	43%	43%	44%	52%	45%	35%
Increase to JobSeeker payments to \$1,115 per fortnight	38%	38%	37%	39%	40%	33%
Provision of JobKeeper wage subsidy of \$1,500 per fortnight to eligible employers for each eligible worker	34%	34%	34%	37%	41%	24%
Base (n)	1,087	538	549	341	361	385

- Support for extending the free childcare scheme beyond the current end date of 28th June has increased from 36% last month to 43%.
- There has been no significant changes in the proportion of people who think the Jobkeeper (now at 34%) or Jobseeker (now at 38%) schemes should be extended beyond September.
- Support for extending the free early childcare scheme is higher among those aged 18-34 than those aged over 55 (52% to 35%).



Agreement with changes to Jobkeeper for early learning professionals

Q This week the Government announced that from 20th July, it would stop paying the economy wide Jobkeeper wage subsidy to childcare services. It would be replaced by transition payments that may be less than the amount of Jobkeeper.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements amount the removal of Jobkeeper for childcare professionals?

	TOTAL: Agree	TOTAL: Disagree	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
Withdrawing this support puts businesses and jobs at risks if there is a second outbreak of Covid-19 or lockdown restrictions are re-introduced	64%	20%	27%	37%	15%	5%	16%
It is the right time to start to remove the Government funding for some industries	57%	28%	21%	36%	19%	9%	15%
It is too soon to withdraw this support for the childcare sector when many children are not yet back in childcare	55%	30%	24%	32%	20%	9%	15%
The Government has broken its promise to maintain the Jobkeeper program until September	53%	26%	22%	30%	18%	9%	21%
I am worried that the Government will remove Jobkeeper support from other industries before the end of September	53%	28%	22%	31%	19%	9%	19%



TOTAL: Agreement	Total	Labor	Federal Voting intention		
			Coalition	Greens	TOTAL: Other
Withdrawing this support puts businesses and jobs at risks if there is a second outbreak of Covid-19 or lockdown restrictions are re-introduced	64%	71%	59%	73%	66%
It is the right time to start to remove the Government funding for some industries	57%	53%	71%	39%	50%
It is too soon to withdraw this support for the childcare sector when many children are not yet back in childcare	55%	65%	45%	70%	62%
The Government has broken its promise to maintain the Jobkeeper program until September	53%	62%	43%	67%	57%
I am worried that the Government will remove Jobkeeper support from other industries before the end of September	53%	61%	46%	69%	54%
Base (n)	1,087	334	412	96	140

- 64% of people agree that the withdrawal of Jobkeeper could put businesses at risk if a second outbreak occurs.
- Over half of people agree that the Government’s decision to change the conditions of the Jobkeeper scheme for early childcare workers means that the Government has broken its promise to keep Jobkeeper until September (53%). Similar numbers agree that ‘It is too soon to withdraw this support for the childcare sector when many children are not yet back in childcare’ (55%) and ‘I am worried that the Government will remove Jobkeeper support from other industries before the end of September’
- 57% agree that it is the right time for the Government to start withdrawing funding for some industries.



Agreement with protests in Australia

Q Following the protests in the United States of America, there have been demonstrations in Australia oppose the deaths of Indigenous people in police custody.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the protests in Australia?

	TOTAL: Agree	TOTAL: Disagree	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
Protesters gathering in large numbers during the Covid-19 puts the entire community at risk	84%	9%	62%	23%	5%	4%	7%
Protesters are justified in their demands for authorities to address the issue of Indigenous deaths in custody	62%	27%	31%	32%	11%	16%	11%
The situation in America is very different to Australia and has no relevance	61%	30%	34%	27%	18%	12%	10%



TOTAL: Agreement	Total	Gender		Age Group		
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+
Protesters gathering in large numbers during the Covid-19 puts the entire community at risk	84%	86%	82%	78%	87%	87%
Protesters are justified in their demands for authorities to address the issue of Indigenous deaths in custody	62%	64%	60%	69%	63%	56%
The situation in America is very different to Australia and has no relevance	61%	67%	54%	54%	62%	64%
Base (n)	1,087	534	553	341	364	382

- While a large majority of people agree that the protests pit the community at risk by spreading Covid-19 (84%), 62% agree that protesters are justified in their demands for authorities to address the issue of Indigenous deaths in custody.
- Men (67%), those aged over 55 (64%) and Coalition voters (74%) are more likely to agree that 'The situation in America is very different to Australia and has no relevance' compared to women (54%), those aged under 35 (54%) and Labor and Greens voters (54% and 38%).



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.

