

The Essential Report

27 July 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 23rd to 26th July 2020 and is based on 1,058 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.

Federal Voting Intention

Q If a Federal election was held tomorrow, to which party would you give your first preference vote in the House of Representatives (Lower House)?

[If don't know] Well which party are you currently leaning towards?

	This week 27/07	Two weeks ago 13/07	29/06	22/06	15/06	08/06
Liberal / Liberal Nationals / Country Liberals	36%	35%	36%	37%	36%	37%
Nationals	2%	3%	3%	2%	3%	3%
Total: Coalition	38%	37%	39%	39%	38%	40%
Labor	35%	34%	33%	33%	35%	33%
Greens	9%	10%	9%	10%	9%	9%
Pauline Hanson's One Nation	4%	4%	4%	5%	5%	4%
Other/Independent	6%	6%	6%	6%	7%	6%
Undecided	8%	9%	8%	7%	7%	8%
2 Party Preferred (2PP+)						
TOTAL: Coalition	45%	45%	47%	48%	47%	47%
Labor	47%	46%	45%	46%	47%	45%
Undecided	8%	9%	8%	7%	7%	8%



Coronavirus concerns

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

	27/07	13/07	22/06	15/06	08/06	01/06	25/05	18/05	11/05	04/05	27/04
Very concerned	43%	36%	25%	28%	27%	32%	30%	33%	34%	32%	39%
Quite concerned	44%	48%	50%	45%	48%	49%	49%	47%	49%	46%	44%
Not that concerned	9%	12%	21%	23%	21%	15%	16%	16%	14%	18%	13%
Not at all concerned	4%	3%	4%	4%	5%	4%	5%	4%	3%	4%	3%
Base (n)	1,058	1,054	1,079	1,087	1,073	1,059	1,087	1,073	1,067	1,093	1,054

	Total	NSW	VIC	State	SA	WA
				QLD		
Very concerned	43%	48%	47%	36%	40%	38%
Quite concerned	44%	43%	43%	47%	46%	48%
Not that concerned	9%	7%	7%	10%	11%	9%
Not at all concerned	4%	2%	3%	7%	3%	6%
Base (n)	1,058	352	239	220	88	110

- Concern about Covid-19 has increased again – two weeks ago 36% of participants were very concerned about the threat of Covid-19 which has increased to 43%.
- Concern is highest in New South Wales (48% are very concerned) and Victoria (47%), while states where Covid-19 cases aren't increasing are less concerned (36% very concerned, QLD; 40% SA, 38% WA).



Government response to Covid-19

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

	27/07	13/07	22/06	15/06	08/06	01/06	25/05	18/05	11/05	04/05	27/04
Very poor	6%	6%	4%	3%	4%	5%	4%	3%	4%	4%	4%
Quite poor	11%	10%	8%	8%	8%	7%	6%	7%	9%	9%	9%
Neither good, nor poor	20%	20%	17%	16%	18%	20%	16%	17%	16%	20%	17%
Quite good	40%	40%	43%	42%	40%	39%	43%	41%	39%	38%	44%
Very good	24%	24%	27%	30%	30%	28%	30%	32%	32%	28%	26%
TOTAL: Poor	16%	16%	12%	11%	12%	12%	11%	11%	13%	14%	13%
TOTAL: Good	64%	64%	71%	72%	70%	68%	73%	73%	71%	66%	70%
Base (n)	1,058	1,054	1,079	1,087	1,073	1,059	1,087	1,073	1,067	1,093	1,054

- Participants' rating of the Federal Government's handling of the crisis is stable from last fortnight, with 64% rating the response as good (either very or quite good).

State Government response to Covid-19

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

All States	27/07	13/07	22/06	15/06	08/06	01/06	25/05	18/05	11/05	04/05	27/04
Very poor	7%	7%	5%	4%	4%	6%	4%	3%	4%	4%	4%
Quite poor	11%	11%	8%	8%	7%	6%	7%	8%	8%	8%	9%
Neither good, nor poor	18%	18%	17%	17%	17%	20%	17%	17%	16%	18%	17%
Quite good	36%	36%	41%	38%	39%	38%	38%	39%	39%	38%	41%
Very good	28%	28%	28%	33%	32%	30%	35%	33%	34%	31%	30%
TOTAL: Poor	18%	17%	13%	12%	11%	12%	11%	11%	12%	12%	13%
TOTAL: Good	65%	64%	69%	71%	71%	68%	73%	72%	73%	70%	70%
Base (n)	1,058	1,054	1,079	1,087	1,073	1,059	1,087	1,073	1,067	1,093	1,054

TOTAL: Good	27/07	13/07	22/06	15/06	08/06	01/06	25/05	18/05	11/05	04/05	27/04
NSW	62%	63%	70%	65%	67%	62%	65%	70%	70%	68%	63%
VIC	53%	49%	65%	75%	72%	71%	73%	71%	71%	72%	77%
QLD	67%	69%	64%	67%	68%	69%	74%	66%	70%	65%	67%
SA	76%	79%	79%	76%	79%	70%	84%	80%	78%	76%	77%
WA	82%	77%	75%	77%	84%	79%	83%	86%	83%	79%	76%



VICTORIA ONLY	27/07	13/07	22/06	15/06	08/06	01/06	25/05	18/05	11/05	04/05	27/04
Very poor	13%	14%	8%	6%	6%	4%	3%	3%	4%	3%	3%
Quite poor	17%	12%	5%	5%	6%	7%	9%	10%	11%	8%	6%
Neither good, nor poor	17%	25%	22%	13%	16%	17%	16%	15%	15%	17%	14%
Quite good	34%	32%	38%	39%	38%	39%	37%	38%	34%	32%	40%
Very good	19%	17%	26%	36%	34%	33%	36%	33%	37%	40%	37%
TOTAL: Poor	30%	26%	13%	11%	12%	11%	11%	14%	14%	11%	9%
TOTAL: Good	53%	49%	65%	75%	72%	71%	73%	71%	71%	72%	77%
Base (n)	239	281	261	275	275	275	275	267	275	275	272

- Victoria’s rating of their State Government’s performance is still well below their results in June and is steady during the last fortnight (53%).
- South Australia (76%) and Western Australia (82%) have the highest state government ratings for handling the crisis.



Preference for elimination or suppression strategy

Q Out of the following two strategies, which do you think the Australian government should pursue in its response to the Covid-19 outbreak?

	Total	Labor	Voting intention		
			NET: Coalition	Greens	NET: Other
Elimination strategy: Work towards removing all cases of Covid-19 in Australia	44%	52%	31%	54%	49%
Suppression strategy: Work towards minimising outbreaks and keeping the number of new cases at a manageable level for medical services until an effective vaccine is available	56%	48%	69%	46%	51%
Base (n)	1,058	334	428	81	107

	Total	State				
		NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA
Elimination strategy: Work towards removing all cases of Covid-19 in Australia	44%	42%	46%	41%	42%	46%
Suppression strategy: Work towards minimising outbreaks and keeping the number of new cases at a manageable level for medical services until an effective vaccine is available	56%	58%	54%	59%	58%	54%
Base (n)	1,058	352	239	220	88	110



- The population is split on the preferred strategy to deal with Covid-19 in Australia. While 56% of participants think the Australian government should pursue a suppression strategy towards Covid-19, 46% opted for elimination of the virus.
- Suppression was the favoured b the majority of residents in all states.
- Coalition voters (69%) are more in favour of the Suppression strategy than, Labor (48%), Greens (46%) and voters for other parties (51%).



Mandatory face masks

Q To what extent do you support or oppose the mandatory use of face masks or coverings in public places to reduce the spread of Covid-19?

	Total	Gender		Age group		
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+
Strongly oppose	5%	6%	4%	4%	8%	2%
Somewhat oppose	8%	10%	6%	12%	9%	3%
Neither support nor oppose	20%	21%	19%	25%	18%	17%
Somewhat support	27%	28%	25%	26%	27%	28%
Strongly support	41%	36%	46%	34%	38%	50%
TOTAL: Oppose	13%	16%	10%	16%	17%	6%
TOTAL: Support	68%	64%	71%	59%	65%	77%
Base (n)	1,058	538	520	341	331	386

	Total	State				
		NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA
Strongly oppose	5%	2%	5%	8%	4%	5%
Somewhat oppose	8%	8%	10%	9%	5%	7%
Neither support nor oppose	20%	20%	12%	25%	26%	27%
Somewhat support	27%	31%	20%	25%	27%	31%
Strongly support	41%	39%	53%	33%	38%	30%
TOTAL: Oppose	13%	10%	14%	17%	9%	12%
TOTAL: Support	68%	70%	74%	58%	65%	61%
Base (n)	1,058	352	239	220	88	110



- There is strong support for the mandatory use of face masks and coverings in public places, with two-thirds (68%) of participants supporting this enforcement. (either strongly or somewhat).
- Support for this position was highest among women (71% support), those over 55 years old (77%), people in NSW (70%) and Victorian residents (74%).



Effectiveness of face masks

Q In your opinion, how effective are face masks or coverings at preventing the spread of Covid-19?

	Total	Gender		Age group		
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+
Very effective	19%	21%	17%	22%	19%	16%
Quite effective	46%	43%	49%	40%	47%	51%
Not that effective	20%	22%	17%	24%	19%	17%
Not effective at all	5%	7%	4%	5%	7%	4%
Unsure	10%	7%	13%	8%	9%	12%
Base (n)	1,058	538	520	341	331	386

	Total	State				
		NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA
Very effective	19%	18%	19%	20%	19%	13%
Quite effective	46%	49%	56%	34%	43%	42%
Not that effective	20%	19%	14%	24%	25%	26%
Not effective at all	5%	4%	5%	10%	2%	6%
Unsure	10%	11%	6%	13%	12%	13%
Base (n)	1,058	352	239	220	88	110

- There is widespread belief that using face masks can reduce the spread of the virus, 19% think they are very effective and 46% quite effective. Just 5% thinking they are not effective at all effective in preventing the spread of Covid-19.
- Victorians are most likely to believe masks are effective at preventing the spread of Covid-19 with 19% believing they are 'very effective' and 56% saying 'quite effective'.



Expected restriction levels

Q In response to the Covid-19 outbreak, what do you expect will happen to the restriction levels in your local area over the next **two months**?

	Total	Gender		NSW	VIC	State		
		Male	Female			QLD	SA	WA
I expect restrictions will become tighter	39%	35%	43%	53%	38%	37%	25%	16%
I expect no change to the restrictions	39%	42%	37%	35%	40%	39%	44%	51%
I expect restrictions will have eased	22%	23%	20%	12%	22%	24%	31%	33%
Base (n)	1,058	538	520	352	239	220	88	110

- Australians are preparing for a continuation, or tightening of restrictions over the next few months. 39% expect tighter restrictions in their local area and the same number do not expect any change to the current rules and guidelines. About one in five (22%) believe that restrictions will ease.
- Women (43%) and residents of New South Wales (53%) are most likely to expect restrictions to become tighter; while men (35%) and Western Australia residents (16%) are less likely to expect this.

Time to return to normal

Q Thinking about the future, how long do you think it will take for the following to occur?

	Within the next six months	Seven months up to one year	One to two years	More than two years	Never
A Covid-19 vaccine will be developed	9%	21%	43%	20%	6%
Quarantine will no longer required after international travel	7%	17%	38%	32%	6%
The housing market will return pre-pandemic levels	7%	15%	35%	38%	5%
International travel will be allowed without restriction	6%	14%	36%	38%	6%
Unemployment will return to pre-pandemic levels	6%	13%	27%	48%	6%
The population will build resistance to Covid-19 through exposure (herd immunity)	7%	12%	23%	32%	26%
Australia will pay off its national debt	5%	6%	14%	53%	23%

LAST MONTH (22/06)	Within the next six months	Seven months up to one year	One to two years	More than two years	Never
A Covid-19 vaccine will be developed	11%	22%	43%	20%	4%
Quarantine will no longer required after international travel	12%	27%	35%	22%	4%
The housing market will return pre-pandemic levels	11%	22%	38%	25%	4%
International travel will be allowed without restriction	10%	23%	39%	24%	4%
Unemployment will return to pre-pandemic levels	8%	17%	37%	33%	6%
The population will build resistance to Covid-19 through exposure (herd immunity)	8%	15%	31%	27%	20%
Australia will pay off its national debt	5%	9%	12%	52%	22%



- Expectations of the effect of the Covid-19 have lengthened in the past month, with more people now thinking the impacts will last for more than two years.
- 32% expect it will be over two years before quarantine following international travel is removed (up from 22% last month). Similarly more people now think it will be over two years before housing prices (25% to 38%), unrestricted international travel (24% to 38%) and unemployment (33% to 48%) return to pre-Covid levels.
- 26% do not think a population-wide resistance to the disease will ever be achieved.



Support for extension of JobKeeper and JobSeeker schemes

Q On Tuesday July 21st, the government announced that JobKeeper payments and the increase to JobSeeker will be extended to March 2021 but that the rates for each will be reduced in October, and again in January. Eligibility for JobKeeper will remain the same, meaning that casual workers will not receive support.

To what extent do you support or oppose the changes to these schemes?

	TOTAL: Support	TOTAL: Oppose	Strongly support	Somewhat support	Neither support nor oppose	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose
Businesses having to be re-tested for JobKeeper to ensure they are still eligible	69%	9%	37%	33%	22%	6%	2%
The continuation of payments to March 2021	66%	12%	31%	35%	22%	8%	5%
The reduction in the amount of payments	54%	21%	22%	33%	25%	12%	9%

	NET: Support	Total	Voting intention			
			Labor	NET: Coalition	Greens	NET: Other
Businesses having to be re-tested for JobKeeper to ensure they are still eligible	69%		70%	76%	58%	72%
The continuation of payments to March 2021	66%		72%	65%	78%	60%
The reduction in the amount of payments	54%		49%	67%	33%	62%
Base (n)		1,058	334	428	81	107

- Extension of the JobKeeper and JobSeeker schemes receives support from a two-thirds majority (66%). While the reduction of payments is supported by just over half (54%), 21% oppose this decision.



Federal parliament sittings

Q Which of the following solutions would you prefer was used by the Federal parliament given the travel restrictions mean some MPs are not able to attend sessions in Canberra in person?

	Total	Labor	Voting intention		
			NET: Coalition	Greens	NET: Other
Parliament sitting face-to-face as normal with social distancing in place for those who can attend	17%	16%	20%	18%	20%
Parliament sitting face-to-face with video conference for those who cannot attend in person	57%	59%	57%	64%	62%
Parliament not sitting until travel restrictions are relaxed for all MPs	13%	15%	14%	8%	9%
Unsure	13%	10%	9%	10%	10%
Base (n)	1,058	334	428	81	107

	Total	Gender		Age group		
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+
Parliament sitting face-to-face as normal with social distancing in place for those who can attend	17%	21%	13%	21%	18%	12%
Parliament sitting face-to-face with video conference for those who cannot attend in person	57%	55%	59%	46%	53%	72%
Parliament not sitting until travel restrictions are relaxed for all MPs	13%	14%	12%	18%	13%	9%
Unsure	13%	9%	16%	15%	16%	8%
Base (n)	1,058	538	520	341	331	386



- The large majority of people want to see parliament continue to sit, either with social distancing measures, (17%), or using video conferencing options (57%). Only 13% would prefer parliament not to sit during the travel restrictions due to Covid-19.



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.

*658556tttttttttttt35y-All Essential Research staff hold Australian Market and Social Research Society (AMSRS) membership and are bound by professional codes of behaviour.

