

The Essential Report – National

05 October 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 30th September to 5th October 2020 and is based on 1,066 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?

	05/10	21/09	07/09	24/08	10/08	27/07	13/07	22/06	15/06	08/06	01/06
Very concerned	30%	36%	37%	40%	50%	43%	36%	25%	28%	27%	32%
Quite concerned	52%	45%	45%	46%	40%	44%	48%	50%	45%	48%	49%
Not that concerned	15%	15%	13%	10%	7%	9%	12%	21%	23%	21%	15%
Not at all concerned	3%	4%	5%	4%	3%	4%	3%	4%	4%	5%	4%
Base (n)	1,066	1,081	1,076	1,068	1,010	1,058	1,054	1,079	1,087	1,073	1,059

- Level of concern with Covid-19 has eased this week. 30% are now very concerned (down from 36% in September), with a corresponding increase to those saying they are Quite concerned (45% to 52%).

Federal government response to Covid-19

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

	05/10	21/09	07/09	24/08	10/08	27/07	13/07	22/06	15/06	08/06	01/06
Very poor	5%	5%	8%	6%	7%	6%	6%	4%	3%	4%	5%
Quite poor	12%	13%	12%	11%	8%	11%	10%	8%	8%	8%	7%
Neither good, nor poor	22%	21%	22%	22%	21%	20%	20%	17%	16%	18%	20%
Quite good	39%	40%	40%	40%	40%	40%	40%	43%	42%	40%	39%
Very good	21%	21%	18%	22%	24%	24%	24%	27%	30%	30%	28%
TOTAL: Poor	18%	18%	19%	17%	16%	16%	16%	12%	11%	12%	12%
TOTAL: Good	60%	61%	59%	61%	63%	64%	64%	71%	72%	70%	68%
Base (n)	1,066	1,081	1,076	1,068	1,010	1,058	1,054	1,079	1,087	1,073	1,059

- Rating of the Federal Government's handling of Covid-19 stays steady at 60% rating it very or quite good (59% last month).



State government response to Covid-19

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

TOTAL: Good	05/10	21/09	07/09	24/08	10/08	27/07	13/07	22/06	15/06	08/06	01/06
NSW	65%	67%	57%	59%	61%	62%	63%	70%	65%	67%	62%
VIC	45%	47%	50%	47%	49%	53%	49%	65%	75%	72%	71%
QLD	69%	68%	66%	73%	68%	67%	69%	64%	67%	68%	69%
SA	81%	81%	74%	65%	72%	76%	79%	79%	76%	79%	70%
WA	83%	84%	87%	84%	86%	82%	77%	75%	77%	84%	79%

- Positive rating of the NSW Government was steady this week (65% rating the performance as good, compared to 67% last month).
- Rating of state government performance was also steady in Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia.



Federal budget engagement

Q How much attention will you pay to the Federal Budget announcements?

	Total	Gender		Age Group		
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+
No attention at all	6%	5%	7%	8%	6%	4%
Not much attention	18%	18%	18%	32%	15%	10%
A little attention	42%	38%	45%	43%	45%	38%
A lot of attention	34%	39%	29%	17%	34%	48%
Base (n)	1,066	531	535	340	341	385

- Most people will be following the budget announcement on Tuesday with 34% saying they will pay a lot of attention, and 42% paying a little attention.
- Men (39% paying a lot of attention) and older people (48%) will be most likely to closely follow the announcements.



Federal budget expectations

Q The Federal Budget will be announced on Tuesday 6th October.

In general, do you expect the Federal Budget will be good or bad for the following?

	Oct'20				Mar'19			
	NET: Very Good / Good	Neither good, nor bad	NET: Very bad / Bad	Don't know	NET: Very Good / Good	Neither good, nor bad	NET: Very bad / Bad	Don't know
Big business	53%	26%	12%	9%	-	-	-	-
People who are well off	51%	30%	10%	8%	58%	23%	9%	10%
Small business	44%	26%	23%	7%	-	-	-	-
The economy overall	34%	27%	32%	7%	35%	33%	24%	9%
Australian families	33%	31%	29%	7%	27%	32%	33%	9%
Older Australians	31%	28%	34%	7%	25%	28%	38%	9%
Average working people	30%	29%	34%	6%	31%	30%	30%	9%
People on lower incomes	30%	23%	40%	6%	26%	32%	31%	10%
Younger Australians	29%	31%	33%	8%	24%	25%	42%	10%
You personally	25%	36%	31%	8%	19%	37%	34%	9%

- Budget expectations are in line with March 2019, showing people are not expecting drastically different announcements this week.
- Over half of people think big business (53%), and those who are well-off (51%) to benefit from the budget, while the losers are expected to be those on a lower income (40% expect these to have a bad/very bad budget), older Australians (34%) and younger Australians (33%).
- More people expect the budget announcement to be bad for them than good. A quarter of people think the budget will benefit them personally (25% think the budget will be good/very good), which is less than those expecting it to be bad/very bad for them (31%).



Federal budget expectations

Q The Federal Budget will be announced on Tuesday 6th October.

In general, do you expect the Federal Budget will be good or bad for the following?

NET: Very good / Good	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Liberal / National	Vote Greens	NET: Vote Other
Big business	53%	62%	47%	68%	58%
People who are well off	51%	62%	41%	67%	56%
Small business	44%	41%	55%	36%	33%
The economy overall	34%	31%	43%	31%	26%
Australian families	33%	30%	43%	28%	23%
Older Australians	31%	27%	39%	34%	23%
Average working people	30%	25%	43%	19%	23%
People on lower incomes	30%	27%	40%	24%	17%
Younger Australians	29%	25%	37%	24%	27%
You personally	25%	22%	32%	27%	18%

- Labor and Greens voters are more likely than Coalition voters to expect a favourable budget for Big businesses (62% and 68% of Labor and Greens voters respectively, to 47% of Coalition) and for those well-off (62% and 67% to 41%).
- For all other groups, Coalition voters are more likely to expect a good budget than Labor or Greens.
- 32% of Coalition voters think they will have a good budget. This was higher than Labor (22%), Greens (27%) or those voting for another independent/minor party (18%).

Economy: Revert to old ways vs opportunity for change

Q Which of the following options is closest to your view on the best way for Australia to recover economically following the Covid-19 pandemic?

	Total	Gender		Age Group		
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+
Now is not the time to experiment with new ideas, we should return to the way the economy was being run	22%	23%	22%	30%	23%	15%
The pandemic has exposed flaws in the economy and there is an opportunity to explore new ways to run the economy	78%	77%	78%	70%	77%	85%
Base (n)	1,066	531	535	340	341	385

	Total	Federal Voting Intention			
		Labor	Liberal + National	Greens	TOTAL: Other
Now is not the time to experiment with new ideas, we should return to the way the economy was being run	22%	21%	24%	23%	22%
The pandemic has exposed flaws in the economy and there is an opportunity to explore new ways to run the economy	78%	79%	76%	77%	78%
Base (n)	1,066	332	433	91	111



- Over three-quarters of people believe that the pandemic has exposed flaws in the economy and there is an opportunity to explore new ways to run the economy (78%) with the remaining 22% thinking that now is not the time to experiment with new ideas, we should return to the way the economy was being run.
- Preference for exploring new ideas was selected by the majority within gender (77% of men, 78% of women), ages (70% of 18-34 year olds, 77% of 35-54 year olds and 85% of those aged over 55), and voting intention.



Economy: Direct investment vs trickle-down approach

Q And which of the following is closest to your view on the best way to create jobs and grow the economy?

	Total	Gender		Age Group		
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+
The government should directly invest in the economy by creating projects and jobs, and raise the standard of living for the majority of workers	69%	67%	70%	57%	66%	81%
The government should relax regulation and lower taxes for the wealthy to encourage businesses to grow and create jobs	19%	23%	14%	28%	20%	10%
Unsure	13%	9%	16%	15%	14%	9%
Base (n)	1,066	531	535	340	341	385

	Total	Labor	Federal Voting Intention		
			Liberal + National	Greens	TOTAL: Other
The government should directly invest in the economy by creating projects and jobs, and raise the standard of living for the majority of workers	69%	72%	66%	77%	75%
The government should relax regulation and lower taxes for the wealthy to encourage businesses to grow and create jobs	19%	17%	22%	19%	17%
Unsure	13%	11%	12%	5%	8%
Base (n)	1,066	332	433	91	111



- There is a majority preference for the government to directly invest in creating jobs and growing the economy.
- 69% opted for direct investment, while 19% preferred deregulation and lower taxes. 13% were unsure between the two options.
- There was no difference in the support for direct investment between men and women (67% to 70%), but men were more likely to select deregulation (23% to 14%).
- There were no differences in preference between voters of Coalition or Labor, with the majority of each all favouring direct investment (72% of Labor voters, 66% of Coalition voters).



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.

