

The Essential Report – National

19 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 14th to 19th October 2020 and is based on 1,082 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 19/10 | Last week 12/10 | Two weeks ago 05/10 | 21/09 | 07/09 | 24/08 | 10/08 |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Liberal / Liberal Nationals / Country Liberals | 36% | 38% | 37% | 38% | 35% | 36% | 36% |
| Nationals | 3% | 3% | 3% | 3% | 2% | 3% | 2% |
| Total: Coalition | 39% | 40% | 39% | 41% | 38% | 39% | 38% |
| Labor | 35% | 33% | 34% | 31% | 32% | 35% | 34% |
| Greens | 9% | 9% | 9% | 10% | 10% | 9% | 9% |
| Pauline Hanson's One Nation | 3% | 3% | 5% | 4% | 3% | 4% | 4% |
| Other/Independent | 7% | 5% | 6% | 5% | 9% | 6% | 5% |
| Undecided | 8% | 9% | 7% | 9% | 8% | 7% | 10% |
| 2 Party Preferred (2PP*) | | | | | | | |
| TOTAL: Coalition | 48% | 47% | 47% | 49% | 45% | 47% | 46% |
| Labor | 45% | 44% | 46% | 42% | 47% | 45% | 44% |
| Undecided | 8% | 9% | 7% | 9% | 8% | 7% | 10% |



Performance of Scott Morrison

Q Do you approve or disapprove of the job Scott Morrison is doing as Prime Minister?

| | Oct'20 | Sep'20 | Aug'20 | Jul'20 | Jun'20 | May'20 | Apr'20 | Mar'20 | Feb'20 | Jan'20 | Dec'19 | Nov'19 |
|-------------------|--------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| TOTAL: Approve | 63% | 64% | 66% | 63% | 65% | 64% | 59% | 41% | 39% | 40% | 45% | 45% |
| TOTAL: Disapprove | 27% | 28% | 23% | 27% | 26% | 27% | 31% | 49% | 52% | 52% | 43% | 41% |
| Don't know | 10% | 8% | 11% | 10% | 8% | 9% | 10% | 10% | 9% | 8% | 13% | 13% |
| Base (n) | 1,082 | 1,076 | 1,010 | 1,054 | 1,059 | 1,093 | 1,069 | 1,096 | 1,056 | 1,081 | 1,035 | 1,075 |

| | Total | Federal Voting Intention | | | TOTAL: Other |
|---------------------|--------------|--------------------------|-----------|--------|--------------|
| | | Labor | Coalition | Greens | |
| Strongly approve | 23% | 10% | 43% | 13% | 20% |
| Approve | 40% | 35% | 46% | 41% | 39% |
| Disapprove | 15% | 24% | 6% | 13% | 21% |
| Strongly disapprove | 12% | 24% | 2% | 21% | 13% |
| Don't know | 10% | 7% | 3% | 12% | 7% |
| TOTAL: Approve | 63% | 45% | 89% | 54% | 58% |
| TOTAL: Disapprove | 27% | 48% | 8% | 34% | 35% |
| Base (n) | 1,082 | 352 | 421 | 84 | 123 |

- The Prime Minister's approval rating is consistent with last month, now at 63% compared to 64% in September.
- Approval of the Prime Minister among is at 89% among Coalition supporters and just under half among Labor voters (45%). More Greens and independent/other party voters approve of the Prime Minister, than disapprove.



Performance of Anthony Albanese

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

| | Oct'20 | Sep'20 | Aug'20 | Jul'20 | Jun'20 | May'20 | Apr'20 | Mar'20 | Feb'20 | Jan'20 | Dec'19 | Nov'19 |
|-------------------|--------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| TOTAL: Approve | 44% | 44% | 44% | 44% | 43% | 42% | 44% | 41% | 41% | 43% | 39% | 37% |
| TOTAL: Disapprove | 29% | 29% | 30% | 28% | 30% | 27% | 29% | 33% | 31% | 30% | 28% | 34% |
| Don't know | 27% | 27% | 25% | 28% | 26% | 31% | 27% | 26% | 28% | 27% | 33% | 29% |
| Base (n) | 1,082 | 1,076 | 1,010 | 1,054 | 1,059 | 1,093 | 1,069 | 1,096 | 1,056 | 1,081 | 1,035 | 1,075 |

| | Total | Federal Voting Intention | | | TOTAL: Other |
|---------------------|--------------|--------------------------|-----------|--------|--------------|
| | | Labor | Coalition | Greens | |
| Strongly approve | 10% | 15% | 7% | 16% | 11% |
| Approve | 33% | 50% | 27% | 27% | 30% |
| Disapprove | 20% | 12% | 30% | 16% | 19% |
| Strongly disapprove | 10% | 1% | 18% | 4% | 19% |
| Don't know | 27% | 21% | 18% | 36% | 20% |
| TOTAL: Approve | 44% | 65% | 34% | 43% | 41% |
| TOTAL: Disapprove | 29% | 13% | 47% | 21% | 38% |
| Base (n) | 1,082 | 352 | 421 | 84 | 123 |

- The Opposition Leader's approval rating remains consistent for the fourth consecutive month at 44%.
- Albanese's approval among Labor voters is steady at 65% following the decline from 70% to 62% between July and August. The proportion of Labor voters who strongly approve of his performance remains at 15%.



Preferred Prime Minister

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

| | Oct'20 | Sep'20 | Aug'20 | Jul'20 | Jun'20 | May'20 | Apr'20 | Mar'20 | Feb'20 | Jan'20 | Nov'19 | Oct'19 |
|------------------|--------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Scott Morrison | 50% | 49% | 52% | 50% | 53% | 50% | 46% | 40% | 36% | 36% | 44% | 43% |
| Anthony Albanese | 25% | 26% | 22% | 27% | 23% | 25% | 27% | 35% | 36% | 39% | 28% | 28% |
| Don't know | 25% | 25% | 26% | 23% | 24% | 25% | 27% | 25% | 28% | 25% | 29% | 29% |
| Base (n) | 1,082 | 1,076 | 1,010 | 1,054 | 1,059 | 1,093 | 1,069 | 1,096 | 1,056 | 1,081 | 1,075 | 1,088 |

| | Total | Labor | Federal Voting Intention | | |
|------------------|--------------|-------|--------------------------|--------|--------------|
| | | | Coalition | Greens | TOTAL: Other |
| Scott Morrison | 50% | 25% | 82% | 32% | 48% |
| Anthony Albanese | 25% | 50% | 8% | 38% | 20% |
| Don't know | 25% | 24% | 10% | 29% | 32% |
| Base (n) | 1,082 | 352 | 421 | 84 | 123 |

- Half of participants believe that Scott Morrison would make a better PM than Anthony Albanese (50%), while a quarter would prefer the opposition leader. A further quarter (25%) of participants don't know who would make the better PM.
- Morrison is strongly favoured by Coalition voters, with 82% believing Morrison makes the better PM, compared to Albanese (8%).
- Half of Labor voters believe Albanese would make the better PM (50%, up from 46% in September). 24% of Labor voters said they didn't know who would make the better leader.



Performance of State Premiers

Q Do you approve or disapprove of the job <NAME> is doing as State Premier?

[Only asked in NSW, VIC, QLD, SA and WA]

| | Gladys Berejiklian NSW | Daniel Andrews VIC | Annastacia Palaszczuk QLD | Steven Marshall SA | Mark McGowan WA |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Strongly approve | 27% | 25% | 23% | 16% | 53% |
| Approve | 41% | 29% | 39% | 36% | 31% |
| Disapprove | 14% | 16% | 12% | 14% | 6% |
| Strongly disapprove | 9% | 24% | 15% | 5% | 1% |
| Don't know | 11% | 6% | 10% | 29% | 10% |
| TOTAL: Approve | 67% | 54% | 62% | 51% | 84% |
| TOTAL: Disapprove | 22% | 40% | 28% | 20% | 7% |
| Base (n) | 352 | 274 | 217 | 82 | 105 |

- Mark McGowan in WA has the highest approval of State premiers, with 84% approving of his leadership, and just 7% disapproval.
- Victorian Dan Andrews has the lowest approval rating (54% approval, with 40% disapproval). He maintains approval among Labor voters (78% approval), but majority of Coalition voters in Victoria disapprove of his leadership (54%).
- Gladys Berejiklian has a high approval rating compared to other state premiers (67%). She has a majority approval among Coalition voters (83%), Labor voters (57%) and other parties (60%).
- 62% of Queenslanders approval of the job Annastacia Palaszczuk is doing ahead of the election later this month. 28% disapprove of the Queensland premier, driven by high disapproval ratings among Coalition voters (37%).

Federal Government led by Labor or Coalition better at...

Q Do you think a Federal Government led by Labor or the Coalition would be better at...?

| | Coalition | Labor | Neither |
|--|-----------|-------|---------|
| Reducing national debt | 42% | 28% | 30% |
| Managing the economy | 44% | 31% | 25% |
| Creating jobs | 39% | 38% | 23% |
| Helping those who've lost work because of Covid-19 get back into the workforce | 38% | 40% | 22% |
| Supporting those in financial need | 35% | 42% | 23% |
| Improving the financial situation of women | 31% | 38% | 31% |

- A Coalition government is thought to be better than Labor at governance issues such as reducing national debt (42% to 28%) and managing the economy (44% to 31%).
- Elements where Labor is seen to do a better job than the Coalition is in supporting those in financial need (42% to 35%) and improving the financial situation for women (38% to 31%).
- Both parties are seen to be equally competent to create jobs (39% Coalition, 38% Labor) and helping those who have lost work dur to Covid-19 (38% Coalition, 40% Labor).

Likelihood of Federal Budget delivering outcomes

Q How likely do you think it will be that the budget will deliver the following outcomes over the next few years?

| | TOTAL: Likely | TOTAL: Not likely | Very likely | Quite likely | Not that likely | Not very likely | Not at all likely |
|--|------------------|----------------------|-------------|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Place unnecessary burdens on future generations | 62% | 14% | 20% | 42% | 24% | 11% | 3% |
| Create long-term problems that will need to be fixed in the future | 58% | 14% | 16% | 42% | 28% | 11% | 4% |
| Help Australia recover from the economic impacts of Covid-19 | 56% | 16% | 13% | 43% | 28% | 11% | 5% |
| Create jobs | 53% | 16% | 11% | 42% | 31% | 12% | 4% |
| Keep debt under control | 36% | 29% | 9% | 27% | 35% | 18% | 12% |



Federal Budget expectations

Q The Federal Budget was announced on Tuesday 6th October.

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

| | Before budget announced 05/10/2020 | | After budget announced 19/10/2020 | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------|
| | NET: Very Good / Good | NET: Very bad / Bad | NET: Very Good / Good | NET: Very bad / Bad |
| People who are well off | 51% | 10% | 56% | 7% |
| The economy overall | 34% | 32% | 41% | 19% |
| Average working people | 30% | 34% | 40% | 21% |
| Australian families | 33% | 29% | 41% | 18% |
| People on lower incomes | 30% | 40% | 35% | 31% |
| Older Australians | 31% | 34% | 29% | 31% |
| Younger Australians | 29% | 33% | 42% | 20% |
| You personally | 25% | 31% | 27% | 24% |
| Small business | 44% | 23% | 45% | 17% |
| Big business | 53% | 12% | 55% | 6% |

- Following the budget, more people than before thought the announcements would be good for the economy overall (41%, up from 34% before the budget), average working Australians (40% from 30% expectation), and young people (42% from 29%).



Federal Budget: Balance of interests between different groups

Q To the best of your knowledge, did the Federal Budget put the interests of each of the groups ahead of the other, or was there a balance?

| Men and women | Total |
|---|--------------|
| This budget puts the interests of men ahead of the interests of women | 31% |
| This budget puts the interests of women ahead of the interests of men | 14% |
| This budget was balanced between women and men | 54% |
| Base (n) | 1,082 |

| Young people and older people | Total |
|---|--------------|
| This budget puts the interests of young people ahead of the interests of older people | 45% |
| This budget puts the interests of older people ahead of the interests of young people | 21% |
| This budget was balanced between the young and the old | 34% |
| Base (n) | 1,082 |

| Employees and businesses | Total |
|--|--------------|
| This budget puts the interests of employees ahead of the interests of businesses | 14% |
| This budget puts the interests of businesses ahead of the interests of employees | 42% |
| This budget was balanced between businesses and employees | 45% |
| Base (n) | 1,082 |



- While the majority thought the budget was balanced between the interests of men and women (54%), over twice as many people thought the interests of men were put ahead of women, than women above men (31% to 14%).
- Most felt the interests of younger Australians were put ahead of older Australians (45%). 34% thought it was balanced and 21% thought the interests of older Australians were prioritised.
- Most felt the budget was balanced between the interests of businesses and employees (45%), with 42% thinking that business interests were prioritised, and 14% thinking employee interests were prioritised.



Federal Budget and post Covid-19 economic recovery

Q To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the recent Federal Budget and the direction for the country to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic?

| | TOTAL: Agree | TOTAL: Disagree | Strongly agree | Somewhat agree | Neither agree, nor disagree | Somewhat disagree | Strongly disagree | Unsure |
|--|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------|
| The decisions the government makes now will affect the future health of the economy | 75% | 5% | 43% | 33% | 13% | 3% | 2% | 7% |
| The government should take the recognition if their budget measures work, just as they should take responsibility if they do not | 70% | 5% | 36% | 34% | 17% | 4% | 2% | 8% |
| There were better approaches to the budget like investing in jobs and services | 51% | 10% | 20% | 31% | 29% | 8% | 2% | 11% |
| The global pandemic means that the health of the economy is out of the government's control | 49% | 21% | 18% | 32% | 22% | 15% | 6% | 7% |

- There is strong agreement that the Government is responsible for the future of the economy. 75% agree that ‘The decisions the government makes now will affect the future health of the economy’ and 70% of people agree that ‘The government should take the recognition if their budget measures work, just as they should take responsibility if they do not’
- However, half of people (49%) agree with the statement that ‘The global pandemic means that the health of the economy is out of the government's control’. Coalition voters are more likely to agree with this statement than Labor voters (58% to 48%).

- Half of people agree that 'There were better approaches to the budget like investing in jobs and services' (51%). Those more likely to agree with this statement include Labor voters (60%), those in paid employment (56%) and men (56%).



NBN

Q Is your home or workplace connected to the NBN?

| | Is your home connected to the NBN? | Is your workplace connected to the NBN? | NET: Home or work connected to NBN |
|----------------|------------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| Yes | 59% | 28% | 65% |
| No | 38% | 19% | 33% |
| Don't know | 3% | 15% | 2% |
| Not applicable | - | 37% | - |

| | Is your home connected to the NBN? | Is your workplace connected to the NBN? | NET: Home or work connected to NBN |
|----------------|------------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| Yes | 76% | 34% | 79% |
| No | 20% | 10% | 19% |
| Don't know | 4% | 17% | 2% |
| Not applicable | - | 38% | - |

- Home connection to NBN has increased from 59% in January 2019 to 76%, while workplace connection is now at 34% (previously 28%).

Q Would you say that your NBN internet service is better or worse than your previous service in terms of speed and reliability?

All people with NBN connection at home/work

| | Oct'20 | Jan'19 |
|--------------------|------------|------------|
| NET: Better | 51% | 51% |
| NET: Worse | 15% | 17% |
| Much better | 24% | 24% |
| A little better | 27% | 27% |
| About the same | 32% | 30% |
| A little worse | 10% | 10% |
| Much worse | 7% | 7% |
| Don't know | 2% | 2% |

- There has been no improvement to the speed and reliability of NBN over the past two years. Half of people using NBN the service has improved since switching (no change from Jan'19) and a third (32%) there has been no change. 15% report having a worse service since moving to NBN.



Q Would you approve or disapprove of privatising the NBN when it is completed in 2020?

| | Federal Voting Intention | | | | | Gender | | Age | | | Jan'19 |
|------------------------|--------------------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|
| | Total | Labor | Coalition | Greens | TOTAL: Other | Male | Female | 18-34 | 35-54 | 55+ | |
| Strongly approve | 11% | 11% | 12% | 20% | 15% | 18% | 5% | 11% | 16% | 6% | 9% |
| Somewhat approve | 22% | 17% | 27% | 19% | 25% | 25% | 19% | 33% | 21% | 12% | 20% |
| Somewhat disapprove | 14% | 14% | 14% | 8% | 14% | 13% | 14% | 13% | 14% | 14% | 18% |
| Strongly disapprove | 25% | 34% | 18% | 26% | 30% | 23% | 26% | 16% | 18% | 39% | 26% |
| Don't know | 29% | 24% | 30% | 28% | 15% | 21% | 36% | 27% | 31% | 29% | 27% |
| NET: Approve | 33% | 28% | 39% | 39% | 40% | 43% | 23% | 45% | 37% | 19% | 29% |
| NET: Disapprove | 38% | 48% | 31% | 34% | 45% | 36% | 40% | 29% | 32% | 52% | 44% |
| Base (n) | 1,082 | 352 | 421 | 84 | 123 | 352 | 555 | 328 | 369 | 385 | 1,089 |

- A third (33%) approve of privatising the NBN when it is completed in 2020 and 38% disapprove.
- Labor voters were more likely to disapprove of privatisation (48%) than Coalition voters (31%) and Greens voters (34%).



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.