

The Essential Report

18 January 2021



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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 13th to 18th January 2021 and is based on 1,084 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.

Performance of Scott Morrison

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

	Jan'21	Dec'20	Nov'20	Oct'20	Sep'20	Aug'20	Jul'20	Jun'20	May'20	Apr'20	Mar'20	Feb'20
TOTAL: Approve	61%	62%	66%	63%	64%	66%	63%	65%	64%	59%	41%	39%
TOTAL: Disapprove	30%	28%	25%	27%	28%	23%	27%	26%	27%	31%	49%	52%
Don't know	9%	11%	9%	10%	8%	11%	10%	8%	9%	10%	10%	9%
Base (n)	1,084	1,071	1,010	1,082	1,076	1,010	1,054	1,059	1,093	1,069	1,096	1,056

	Total	Federal Voting Intention			TOTAL: Other
		Labor	Coalition	Greens	
Strongly approve	20%	8%	42%	4%	9%
Approve	40%	39%	48%	31%	30%
Disapprove	18%	30%	6%	22%	22%
Strongly disapprove	13%	18%	2%	35%	20%
Don't know	9%	5%	2%	8%	19%
TOTAL: Approve	61%	47%	90%	35%	39%
TOTAL: Disapprove	30%	48%	8%	57%	42%
Base (n)	1,084	334	431	118	106

- The Prime Minister's approval rating is at 61%, unchanged since last month.
- Approval of the Prime Minister is at 90% among Coalition supporters and 47% among Labor voters, both also unchanged since last month (90% and 48%).



Performance of Anthony Albanese

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

	Jan'21	Dec'20	Nov'20	Oct'20	Sep'20	Aug'20	Jul'20	Jun'20	May'20	Apr'20	Mar'20	Feb'20
TOTAL: Approve	42%	43%	40%	44%	44%	44%	44%	43%	42%	44%	41%	41%
TOTAL: Disapprove	33%	29%	33%	29%	29%	30%	28%	30%	27%	29%	33%	31%
Don't know	25%	28%	27%	27%	27%	25%	28%	26%	31%	27%	26%	28%
Base (n)	1,084	1,071	1,010	1,082	1,076	1,010	1,054	1,059	1,093	1,069	1,096	1,056

	Total	Federal Voting Intention			TOTAL: Other
		Labor	Coalition	Greens	
Strongly approve	9%	16%	8%	8%	3%
Approve	32%	47%	26%	37%	20%
Disapprove	23%	14%	33%	22%	25%
Strongly disapprove	10%	3%	16%	7%	22%
Don't know	25%	19%	16%	26%	30%
TOTAL: Approve	42%	63%	35%	45%	24%
TOTAL: Disapprove	33%	18%	49%	29%	47%
Base (n)	1,084	334	431	118	106

- The Opposition Leader's approval rating is now 42%, consistent with ratings seen throughout last year.



Preferred Prime Minister

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

	Jan'21	Dec'20	Nov'20	Oct'20	Sep'20	Aug'20	Jul'20	Jun'20	May'20	Apr'20	Mar'20	Feb'20
Scott Morrison	51%	50%	53%	50%	49%	52%	50%	53%	50%	46%	40%	36%
Anthony Albanese	25%	24%	24%	25%	26%	22%	27%	23%	25%	27%	35%	36%
Don't know	25%	26%	24%	25%	25%	26%	23%	24%	25%	27%	25%	28%
Base (n)	1,084	1,071	1,010	1,082	1,076	1,010	1,054	1,059	1,093	1,069	1,096	1,056

	Total	Labor	Federal Voting Intention		
			Coalition	Greens	TOTAL: Other
Scott Morrison	51%	28%	83%	24%	45%
Anthony Albanese	25%	47%	8%	49%	16%
Don't know	25%	26%	9%	27%	39%
Base (n)	1,084	334	431	118	106

- Half of participants believe that Scott Morrison would make a better PM than Anthony Albanese (51%), while a quarter would prefer the Opposition Leader (25%). A further quarter (25%) of participants don't know who would make the better PM.
- Morrison is strongly favoured by Coalition voters, with 83% believing Morrison makes the better PM, compared to Albanese (8%).



- Just under half of Labor voters believe Albanese would make the better PM (47%). 26% of Labor voters said they don't know who would make the better leader.



Top Federal Government priorities for 2021

Q From the options below, which of the following do you think the Federal Government should prioritise in 2021?

Please rank all the options below by dragging and dropping them in order of highest priority (1) to lowest priority (10).

	TOTAL: Highest priority (Ranked 1)	Total	Federal Voting Intention			
			Labor	TOTAL: Coalition	Greens	TOTAL: Other
Provide the necessary healthcare resources to protect the country from Covid-19	24%		27%	23%	10%	21%
Stimulate job growth	13%		9%	17%	9%	11%
Reduce household bills	12%		15%	10%	12%	17%
Invest in public systems (e.g. aged care, childcare, healthcare) to safeguard the country from the ongoing effects of Covid-19	12%		13%	12%	8%	9%
Minimise environmental damage by addressing the effects of climate change	10%		12%	4%	25%	15%
Make the increase to the JobSeeker payment permanent	9%		10%	6%	14%	12%
Reduce the financial deficit in the Federal Budget	7%		5%	11%	3%	4%
Improve trade relations with China	5%		3%	9%	4%	5%
Include recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the constitution	5%		4%	6%	11%	2%
Build closer ties with the US and President-elect Joe Biden	3%		2%	3%	4%	4%
Base (n)	1,084		334	431	118	106



- About a quarter (24%) of people think the highest priority for the Federal Government this year is to provide the necessary healthcare resources to protect the country from Covid-19.
- Following this, investing in public systems (e.g. aged care, childcare, healthcare) to safeguard the country from the ongoing effects of Covid-19 was the top priority for 12% of people. Stimulating job growth and reducing household bills are also front of mind for Australians (13% and 12% respectively).
- Coalition voters consider stimulating job growth as a higher government priority than other voters (17% compared to 9% Labor voters, 9% Greens voters and 11% other voters).



Uptake of a Covid-19 vaccine

Q Once a vaccine for Covid-19 becomes available in Australia, how long would you wait before taking it?

	18/01	14/12	10/08
I'd get vaccinated as soon as possible	42%	43%	56%
I'd get vaccinated, but wouldn't do it straight away	47%	46%	35%
I'd never get vaccinated	11%	10%	8%
Base (n)	1,084	1,071	1,010

	Total	Gender		Age Group			Federal Voting Intention			
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Labor	TOTAL: Coalition	Greens	TOTAL: Other
I'd get vaccinated as soon as possible	42%	51%	34%	30%	42%	54%	48%	49%	34%	33%
I'd get vaccinated, but wouldn't do it straight away	47%	38%	55%	57%	46%	39%	44%	44%	57%	42%
I'd never get vaccinated	11%	11%	11%	14%	13%	7%	8%	7%	9%	25%
Base (n)	1,084	539	545	341	358	385	334	431	118	106

- Fewer people say they would get a Covid-19 vaccine immediately than mid last year. 42% would get a vaccine as soon as possible, down from 56% last August. 47% would get vaccinated, but just not straight away (up from 35% in August) and 11% say they would never get vaccinated.
- Those most likely to get the vaccine immediately include men (51%) and those aged over 55 (54%).



- Those voting for independent or minor parties are the most likely to say they would never get vaccinated (25%).



Perceptions of change in the standard of living for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

- Q In your opinion, over the past 10 years, have things got better or worse for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia, or have things stayed much the same?

	Jan'21	Jun'19
A lot better	18%	18%
A little better	30%	28%
Stayed much the same	32%	36%
A little worse	7%	5%
A lot worse	3%	3%
Don't know	11%	10%
TOTAL: Better	48%	46%
TOTAL: Worse	10%	8%
Base (n)	1,084	1,097

- Nearly half (48%) believe things have got better for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples over the last 10 years, unchanged since June 2019 (46%).
- About a third (32%) state that in their opinion, conditions have stayed much the same for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders over the past 10 years, while 10% believe things have got worse. Both figures were also at a similar level in June 2019.

	Total	Labor	Coalition	Greens	NET: Other
A lot better	18%	15%	23%	9%	20%
A little better	30%	32%	33%	22%	27%
Stayed much the same	32%	34%	31%	45%	26%
A little worse	7%	8%	3%	14%	10%
A lot worse	3%	3%	2%	7%	7%
Don't know	11%	8%	8%	4%	9%
TOTAL: Better	48%	47%	57%	30%	47%
TOTAL: Worse	10%	11%	4%	21%	17%
Base (n)	1,084	334	431	118	106

- Coalition voters are the most likely to think things have got better for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the last decade (57% compared to 47% Labor voters, 30% Greens voters and 47% other voters).



Changing views towards Australia Day

Q Will you personally be doing anything to celebrate Australia Day or do you treat it as just a public holiday?

	Jan'21	Jan'20	Jan'19	Jan '17	Jan '16	Jan '15
Doing something to celebrate Australia Day	29%	34%	40%	34%	38%	40%
Just a public holiday	53%	46%	45%	46%	44%	41%
Working – I don't get the Australia Day holiday	6%	6%	6%	5%	6%	7%
Don't know	12%	14%	9%	15%	12%	12%
Base (n)	1,084	1,080	1,652	1,015	1,028	1,020

- Under a third (29%) of people are doing something to celebrate Australia Day this year, lower than in previous years (34% in 2020 and 40% in 2019).
- Just over half (53%) say they treat it as just a public holiday, which is the highest recorded since 2015.
- 6% are working and don't get the holiday, and 12% don't know.



	Total	Gender		Age Group			Federal Voting Intention			
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Labor	TOTAL: Coalition	Greens	TOTAL: Other
Doing something to celebrate Australia Day	29%	35%	24%	23%	34%	31%	30%	36%	9%	32%
Just a public holiday	53%	47%	58%	58%	49%	53%	55%	48%	76%	45%
Working – I don't get the Australia Day holiday	6%	6%	5%	8%	7%	2%	4%	7%	8%	7%
Don't know	12%	11%	13%	11%	11%	15%	11%	9%	8%	15%
Base (n)	1,084	539	545	341	358	385	334	431	118	106

- Coalition voters are the most likely to be doing something to celebrate Australia Day compared to other voters (36% followed by 30% Labor voters, 32% other voters and 9% Greens voters). For the majority of Greens voters (76%), Australia Day is just a public holiday.
- Those aged 18-34 are less likely to be doing something to celebrate Australia Day than older cohorts (23% compared to 34% of those 35-54 and 31% of those over 55).



Support towards a separate national day

Q It has been suggested that Australia should have a separate national day to recognise Indigenous Australians. Do you...?

	Jan'21	Jan'20	Jan'19	Oct'18
Support a separate day and keep Australia Day	35%	32%	37%	36%
Support a separate day to replace Australia Day	18%	18%	15%	14%
Do not support a separate day	35%	40%	40%	37%
Don't know	12%	11%	8%	12%
TOTAL: Support a separate day	53%	50%	52%	50%
Base (n)	1,084	1,080	1,652	1,027

- Support for a separate day to recognise Indigenous Australians (either in place, or alongside Australia Day) is now at 53% (50% in 2020).
- 35% support including a separate national day with a further 18% supporting a replacement of Australia Day.
- Over a third (35%) don't support a separate day.

	Total	Gender		Age Group			Federal Voting Intention			
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Labor	TOTAL: Coalition	Greens	TOTAL: Other
Support a separate day and keep Australia Day	35%	38%	32%	39%	41%	26%	43%	36%	24%	30%
Support a separate day to replace Australia Day	18%	16%	20%	27%	16%	13%	18%	13%	53%	17%
Do not support a separate day	35%	35%	34%	17%	29%	55%	29%	45%	14%	45%
Don't know	12%	11%	14%	16%	14%	6%	11%	7%	9%	8%
TOTAL: Support a separate day	53%	54%	52%	67%	56%	39%	61%	49%	77%	47%
Base (n)	1,084	539	545	341	358	385	334	431	118	106

- Support for a separate day is highest among Greens voters (77%), Labor voters (61%) and those aged 18-34 (67%).



Support towards the national anthem change

Q On January 1st 2021, the second line of Australia's national anthem changed from, "For we are young and free" to "For we are one and free".

To what extent do you support or oppose this change?

	Total	Gender		Age Group			Federal Voting Intention			
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Labor	TOTAL: Coalition	Greens	TOTAL: Other
Strongly support	25%	27%	24%	22%	31%	21%	27%	28%	30%	20%
Somewhat support	29%	28%	29%	33%	23%	30%	31%	29%	36%	21%
Neither support nor oppose	30%	28%	32%	32%	29%	30%	29%	26%	30%	28%
Somewhat oppose	7%	6%	7%	6%	6%	7%	6%	7%	3%	11%
Strongly oppose	10%	11%	8%	6%	10%	12%	8%	10%	2%	20%
TOTAL: Support	54%	55%	52%	56%	54%	51%	57%	57%	65%	41%
TOTAL: Oppose	16%	17%	15%	12%	17%	19%	14%	17%	5%	31%
Base (n)	1,084	539	545	341	358	385	334	431	118	106



- Over half (54%) of Australians support the change in the national anthem's second line from "For we are young and free" to "For we are one and free" which was implemented at the start of the year. A quarter (25%) strongly support this change.
- Support towards the national anthem change is strongest among Greens voters (65%), followed by Coalition voters (57%), Labor voters (57%) and other voters (41%).
- Those voting for independent and minor parties are the most opposed to the change (31%).



Attitudes towards bushfires and climate change

Q Thinking about the bushfires in some parts of the country, which of the following statements is closest to your view?

	Jan'21	Jan'20	Nov'19	Oct'13
It is likely that the bushfires are linked to climate change and it is appropriate to publicly raise this issue	49%	44%	43%	27%
It is likely that the bushfires are linked to climate change, but it is inappropriate to publicly raise this issue at this time	18%	19%	17%	14%
It is unlikely the bushfires are linked to climate change	20%	26%	30%	48%
Don't know	12%	11%	11%	11%
Base (n)	1,084	1,081	1,083	1,075

- Just under half (49%) of people think it is likely that the bushfires are linked to climate change and it is appropriate to publicly raise this issue, the highest proportion in the last three years (up from 44% this time last year). Correspondingly, fewer think it is unlikely the bushfires are linked to climate change (20%, down from 26%).
- About the same amount of people as previous years think it is likely that the bushfires are linked to climate change, but it is inappropriate to publicly raise this issue at this time (18%).

	Total	Gender		Age Group			Federal Voting Intention			
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Labor	TOTAL: Coalition	Greens	TOTAL: Other
It is likely that the bushfires are linked to climate change and it is appropriate to publicly raise this issue	49%	49%	50%	49%	51%	48%	58%	42%	65%	42%
It is likely that the bushfires are linked to climate change, but it is inappropriate to publicly raise this issue at this time	18%	20%	16%	26%	17%	12%	15%	20%	24%	17%
It is unlikely the bushfires are linked to climate change	20%	21%	20%	10%	18%	32%	15%	28%	4%	32%
Don't know	12%	10%	14%	14%	14%	8%	11%	9%	7%	9%
Base (n)	1,084	539	545	341	358	385	334	431	118	106

- About a third (32%) of those over 55 think it is unlikely the bushfires are linked to climate change, the highest among the three age brackets.
- More people aged 18-34 think it is likely that the bushfires are linked to climate change, but it is inappropriate to publicly raise this issue at this time, than those aged 35-54 and those over 55 (26% to 17% and 12% respectively).
- The view that it is likely that the bushfires are linked to climate change and it is appropriate to publicly raise this issue is high; this is highest among Greens voters (65%), followed by Labor voters (58%), Coalition voters (42%) and other voters (42%).
- Minor and independent party voters and Coalition voters are the most likely to think it is unlikely the bushfires are linked to climate change (32% and 28% respectively).



Climate change acceptance

Q Do you believe that there is fairly conclusive evidence that climate change is happening and caused by human activity or do you believe that the evidence is still not in and we may just be witnessing a normal fluctuation in the earth’s climate which happens from time to time?

	Jan'21	Jan'20	Nov'19	Mar'19	Oct'18	Sep'17	Aug'16
Climate change is happening and is caused by human activity	58%	56%	61%	62%	63%	64%	57%
We are just witnessing a normal fluctuation in the earth’s climate	32%	32%	28%	27%	25%	24%	26%
Don't know	10%	13%	11%	12%	13%	12%	17%
Base (n)	1,084	1,081	1,083	1,089	1,027	1,011	1,022

- There has been little shift in attitudes to the acceptance of climate change over recent years. Over half of people (58%) believe climate change is happening and is caused by human activity.
- Over a third still believe we are just witnessing a normal fluctuation in the earth’s climate (32%) and 10% aren’t sure which they believe.



	Total	Gender		Age Group			Federal Voting Intention			
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Labor	TOTAL: Coalition	Greens	TOTAL: Other
Climate change is happening and is caused by human activity	58%	54%	61%	62%	58%	54%	67%	50%	78%	45%
We are just witnessing a normal fluctuation in the earth's climate	32%	36%	28%	24%	31%	40%	24%	43%	17%	44%
Don't know	10%	9%	11%	15%	11%	6%	9%	7%	5%	11%
Base (n)	1,084	539	545	341	358	385	334	431	118	106

- Acceptance that climate change is happening and is caused by human activity is high across all voters, but highest among Greens voters (78%) and Labor voters (67%), followed by Coalition voters (50%) and other voters (45%).
- Climate change denial is highest among Coalition voters (43%), those over 55 (40%) and men (36%), whom are the most likely to believe we are just witnessing a normal fluctuation in the earth's climate.



Addressing climate change

Q As far as you know, do you think Australia is doing enough, not enough or too much to address climate change?

	Jan'21	Jan'20	Nov'19	Mar'19	Dec'18	Oct'18	Sep'17	Aug'16
Not doing enough	42%	62%	60%	51%	53%	56%	56%	52%
Doing enough	35%	19%	22%	27%	24%	23%	20%	22%
Doing too much	10%	8%	8%	11%	9%	7%	8%	8%
Don't know	13%	11%	10%	12%	14%	13%	16%	18%
Base (n)	1,084	1,081	1,083	1,089	1,032	1,027	1,011	1,022

- Over a third (35%) of people think Australia is doing enough to address climate change, the highest proportion in the last five years.
- 42% still think not enough is being done, however this is a significant drop from last year (62%) and the years before.
- 10% think Australia is doing too much to address climate change and 13% don't know. Both figures are similar to previous years.



	Total	Gender		Age Group			Federal Voting Intention			
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Labor	TOTAL: Coalition	Greens	TOTAL: Other
Not doing enough	42%	36%	48%	40%	41%	45%	56%	28%	69%	39%
Doing enough	35%	38%	33%	33%	34%	39%	29%	52%	17%	28%
Doing too much	10%	15%	4%	9%	13%	7%	6%	12%	7%	21%
Don't know	13%	11%	15%	17%	12%	9%	9%	8%	8%	12%
Base (n)	1,084	539	545	341	358	385	334	431	118	106

- Greens voters are the most likely to think Australia is not doing enough to address climate change (69%), followed by Labor voters (56%).
- Compared to other voters, Coalition voters are the most likely to think enough is being done (52%), and those voting for minor and independent parties are the most likely to think Australia is doing too much for climate change (21%).
- Women are more likely to think not enough is being done to address climate change than men (48% to 36% respectively).



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.

