

The Essential Report

01 February 2021



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Prepared By: Essential Research

Data Supplied by:



Our researchers are members of the 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 27th January to 1st February 2021 and is based on 1,092 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 01/02	Two weeks ago 18/01	14/12	30/11	16/11	02/11	19/10
Liberal / Liberal Nationals / Country Liberals	35%	37%	34%	37%	36%	36%	36%
Nationals	2%	3%	3%	4%	3%	3%	3%
Total: Coalition	37%	40%	37%	41%	38%	39%	39%
Labor	35%	33%	35%	33%	35%	35%	35%
Greens	10%	10%	8%	8%	9%	9%	9%
Pauline Hanson's One Nation	3%	3%	4%	4%	4%	3%	3%
Other/Independent	7%	7%	7%	6%	6%	5%	7%
Undecided	8%	7%	9%	8%	7%	9%	8%
2 Party Preferred (2PP+)							
TOTAL: Coalition	44%	48%	45%	49%	45%	44%	48%
Labor	47%	45%	46%	43%	47%	46%	45%
Undecided	8%	7%	9%	8%	7%	9%	8%



Federal government response to Covid-19

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

	01/02	30/11	16/11	02/11	05/10	21/09	07/09	24/08	10/08	27/07	13/07	22/06
Very poor	4%	6%	5%	5%	5%	5%	8%	6%	7%	6%	6%	4%
Quite poor	11%	8%	9%	10%	12%	13%	12%	11%	8%	11%	10%	8%
Neither good nor poor	19%	19%	18%	24%	22%	21%	22%	22%	21%	20%	20%	17%
Quite good	42%	41%	41%	39%	39%	40%	40%	40%	40%	40%	40%	43%
Very good	25%	26%	26%	22%	21%	21%	18%	22%	24%	24%	24%	27%
TOTAL: Poor	14%	13%	15%	15%	18%	18%	19%	17%	16%	16%	16%	12%
TOTAL: Good	67%	67%	67%	61%	60%	61%	59%	61%	63%	64%	64%	71%
Base (n)	1,092	1,034	1,010	1,063	1,066	1,081	1,076	1,068	1,010	1,058	1,054	1,079

- Rating of the federal government's handling of Covid-19 is stable at 67% from the last time this was measured in Nov'20, with 67% rating the handling of the pandemic 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?

TOTAL: Good	01/02	30/11	16/11	02/11	05/10	21/09	07/09	24/08	10/08	27/07	13/07	22/06
NSW	71%	76%	75%	68%	65%	67%	57%	59%	61%	62%	63%	70%
VIC	61%	60%	59%	55%	45%	47%	50%	47%	49%	53%	49%	65%
QLD	78%	72%	71%	69%	69%	68%	66%	73%	68%	67%	69%	64%
SA	80%	70%	76%	77%	81%	81%	74%	65%	72%	76%	79%	79%
WA	80%	83%	82%	81%	83%	84%	87%	84%	86%	82%	77%	75%

- Positive rating of the NSW government has dropped to 71% (from 76% at the end of November).
- Positive rating of the QLD government has increased to 78%, the highest rating we've seen in the last six months.
- The rating of the Victorian government is still the lowest rating of states at 61%.



Preference towards federal vs state government Covid-19 vaccine rollout

Q As vaccinations against Covid-19 are rolled out across Australia, which authority would you prefer to be responsible for the distribution of the vaccinations in your state or territory?

	Total	Labor	Federal Voting Intention		
			TOTAL: Coalition	Greens	TOTAL: Other
The federal government	38%	31%	50%	32%	38%
Your state or territory government	44%	54%	39%	44%	40%
Unsure	19%	16%	11%	24%	22%
Base (n)	1,092	361	400	97	126

- 44% of Australians would prefer their state or territory government to be responsible for the distribution of Covid-19 vaccinations, compared to 38% who would prefer the federal government to take charge of this, and 19% are unsure.
- Preference for their state or territory government to handle the rollout of vaccines is highest among Labor voters (54%), followed by 44% Greens voters, 40% minor and independent party voters and 39% Coalition voters.



Confidence in Covid-19 vaccine rollout

Q How confident are you in each of the following?

That the rollout of vaccinations against Covid-19 in Australia will be...

	TOTAL: Confident	TOTAL: Not confident
... done efficiently	68%	26%
... done safely	72%	22%
... effective at stopping Covid-19 within the country	58%	33%

- Most Australians are confident in the Covid-19 vaccine rollout in Australia, with 68% confident that it will be done efficiently, 72% confident it will be done safely and 58% confident it will be effective at stopping Covid-19 within the country.

Confidence in Covid-19 vaccine rollout

Q How confident are you in each of the following?

That the rollout of vaccinations against Covid-19 in Australia will be...

TOTAL: Confident	Federal Voting Intention			
	Labor	TOTAL: Coalition	Greens	TOTAL: Other
... done efficiently	65%	78%	66%	64%
... done safely	71%	80%	67%	61%
... effective at stopping Covid-19 within the country	59%	66%	57%	44%

- Coalition voters are the most confident in the efficiency, safety and effectiveness of the Covid-19 vaccine rollout compared to other voters.

Confidence in efficiency of Covid-19 vaccine rollout

Q How confident are you in each of the following?

That the rollout of vaccinations against Covid-19 in Australia will be done efficiently

	Total	Gender		Age Group			Federal Voting Intention			
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Labor	TOTAL: Coalition	Greens	TOTAL: Other
Very confident	19%	23%	16%	16%	21%	20%	15%	29%	18%	16%
Fairly confident	48%	45%	51%	44%	47%	53%	50%	49%	48%	48%
Not that confident	19%	21%	17%	27%	16%	16%	22%	14%	22%	21%
Not confident at all	7%	7%	7%	7%	9%	5%	7%	5%	8%	13%
Unsure	6%	4%	8%	6%	7%	6%	6%	4%	3%	2%
TOTAL: Confident	68%	68%	67%	60%	68%	73%	65%	78%	66%	64%
TOTAL: Not confident	26%	28%	25%	34%	25%	21%	29%	18%	30%	34%
Base (n)	1,092	532	560	318	391	383	361	400	97	126

- While confidence in the efficiency of the Covid-19 rollout is relatively high across all demographics, those who are older are more confident than younger cohorts (73% of those over 55 are confident, followed by 68% those 35-54 and 60% those 18-34).
- Out of all voters, Coalition voters are the most confident that the vaccine rollout will be efficient, with 78% who are confident and of this, nearly a third (29%) who are very confident.

Confidence in safety of Covid-19 vaccine rollout

Q How confident are you in each of the following?

That the rollout of vaccinations against Covid-19 in Australia will be done safely

	Total	Gender		Age Group			Federal Voting Intention			
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Labor	TOTAL: Coalition	Greens	TOTAL: Other
Very confident	22%	24%	20%	18%	21%	27%	20%	29%	21%	22%
Fairly confident	50%	51%	49%	46%	48%	55%	51%	51%	46%	38%
Not that confident	15%	14%	15%	22%	16%	7%	17%	11%	19%	20%
Not confident at all	7%	6%	9%	8%	10%	4%	6%	6%	10%	14%
Unsure	6%	5%	8%	6%	6%	7%	6%	3%	3%	5%
TOTAL: Confident	72%	75%	69%	64%	69%	82%	71%	80%	67%	61%
TOTAL: Not confident	22%	21%	23%	31%	26%	11%	23%	17%	30%	34%
Base (n)	1,092	532	560	318	391	383	361	400	97	126

- Reflecting confidence in the efficiency of the Covid-19 vaccine rollout, confidence it will be done safely is high overall as well. Again, those over 55 and Coalition voters have the most confidence in this (82% and 80% respectively).



Confidence in effectiveness Covid-19 vaccine rollout

Q How confident are you in each of the following?

That the rollout of vaccinations against Covid-19 in Australia will be effective at stopping Covid-19 within the country

	Total	Gender		Age Group			Federal Voting Intention			
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Labor	TOTAL: Coalition	Greens	TOTAL: Other
Very confident	13%	18%	9%	13%	17%	10%	13%	17%	10%	14%
Fairly confident	44%	43%	45%	43%	42%	48%	47%	49%	47%	30%
Not that confident	23%	23%	23%	25%	22%	22%	25%	19%	21%	32%
Not confident at all	10%	9%	12%	11%	13%	7%	10%	7%	10%	17%
Unsure	9%	7%	11%	8%	7%	12%	6%	7%	13%	6%
TOTAL: Confident	58%	61%	54%	56%	58%	58%	59%	66%	57%	44%
TOTAL: Not confident	33%	32%	35%	36%	35%	30%	35%	26%	31%	49%
Base (n)	1,092	532	560	318	391	383	361	400	97	126

- However, when it comes to confidence in the effectiveness of the Covid-19 vaccine rollout at stopping the spread within the country, Australians are more cautious. While over half (58%) are confident in this, over a third (33%) are not confident.
- Coalition voters are the most optimistic with 66% confident in the effectiveness of the vaccine rollout, followed by 59% Labor voters, 57% Greens voters and 44% minor and independent party voters.



Views towards early federal election

Q Some have suggested that the Prime Minister might call an early election later in 2021. It is not due until 2022.

Which of the following is closer to your view?

	Total	Gender		Age Group			Federal Voting Intention			
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Labor	TOTAL: Coalition	Greens	TOTAL: Other
An early federal election in 2021 will be good for Australia, because a lot has changed since the last election	42%	42%	43%	50%	46%	31%	47%	39%	50%	41%
It would just be opportunism for the Prime Minister to call an early election, and the federal election should stay in 2022	58%	58%	57%	50%	54%	69%	53%	61%	50%	59%
Base (n)	1,092	532	560	318	391	383	361	400	97	126

- More Australians think it would just be opportunism for the Prime Minister to call an early election, and the federal election should stay in 2022 (58%), than those who think an early federal election in 2021 will be good for Australia, because a lot has changed since the last election (42%).
- Most of those over 55 think the federal election should stay in 2022 (69%), compared to just over half of those 35-54 (54%) and half (50%) of those 18-34.
- The majority of Coalition voters (61%) and Labor voters (53%) would prefer to keep the election for the next scheduled date in 2022.



Attitudes towards 2021 in comparison to 2020

Q Thinking about the next 12 months, do you think 2021 will be a better or worse year than 2020 for each of the following?

	TOTAL: Better than 2020	TOTAL: Worse than 2020	No different to 2020
You personally	47%	13%	39%
Your job	34%	12%	54%
The economy	55%	22%	23%
The nation	56%	18%	25%
The planet	37%	30%	33%

- Australians are generally optimistic that 2021 will be better than 2020. People are expecting that 2021 will be a better year than 2020 for the nation (56%) and the economy (55%). Just under half (47%) think 2021 will be better for themselves personally.
- Australians are less optimistic that 2021 will be better than 2020 for the planet (37%).

Concern towards removal of Google search and Facebook news

Q The Australian government has proposed new rules that will mean companies like Google and Facebook have to pay news media companies for the use of their content.

In response, Google has threatened to remove its search engine from Australia and Facebook has threatened to remove news from its feed for all Australian users.

How concerned are you at the prospect of not being able to use these services if they are removed by Google and Facebook?

	Total	Gender		Age Group			Federal Voting Intention			
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Labor	TOTAL: Coalition	Greens	TOTAL: Other
Very concerned	25%	25%	24%	28%	33%	15%	25%	23%	29%	27%
Quite concerned	32%	34%	31%	45%	30%	23%	36%	33%	34%	30%
Not that concerned	24%	20%	27%	17%	23%	31%	25%	23%	22%	24%
Not at all concerned	19%	21%	17%	10%	14%	31%	14%	22%	16%	19%
TOTAL: Concerned	57%	59%	56%	73%	63%	38%	61%	56%	62%	56%
TOTAL: Not concerned	43%	41%	44%	27%	37%	62%	39%	44%	38%	44%
Base (n)	1,092	532	560	318	391	383	361	400	97	126

- Slightly more people are concerned about the prospect of not being able to use Google search and Facebook news if they are removed than those who aren't concerned (57% vs 43%).
- Those who are 18-34 are most concerned (73%), followed by those 35-54 (63%). Those over 55 are not as concerned compared to younger cohorts (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 Research Society membership and are bound by professional codes of behaviour.