The Essential Report

10 May 2021

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The Essential Report

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Prepared By: Essential Research

Data Supplied by:

qualtrics

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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 5th to 10th May 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.

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Performance of Scott Morrison

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

	May'21	Apr'21	End Mar'21	Mid Mar'21	Feb'21	Jan'21	Dec'20	Nov'20	Oct'20	Sep'20	Aug'20	Jul'20	Jun'20
TOTAL: Approve	**58%**	54%	57%	62%	65%	61%	62%	66%	63%	64%	66%	63%	65%
TOTAL: Disapprove	**32%**	37%	35%	29%	28%	30%	28%	25%	27%	28%	23%	27%	26%
Don't know	**10%**	9%	8%	8%	7%	9%	11%	9%	10%	8%	11%	10%	8%
Base (n)	**1,092**	1,368	1,100	1,124	1,109	1,084	1,071	1,010	1,082	1,076	1,010	1,054	1,059

TOTAL: Approve	May'21	12 Apr'21	29 Mar'21	15 Mar'21	Feb'21	Jan'21	Dec'20	Nov'20
Men	**62%**	61%	65%	65%	65%	62%	68%	65%
Women	**55%**	46%	49%	59%	65%	59%	56%	67%
TOTAL: Disapprove								
Men	**31%**	32%	30%	28%	28%	32%	25%	28%
Women	**34%**	42%	40%	30%	28%	29%	30%	23%

- The Prime Minister's approval rating has risen to 58% (from 54% in April). This is similar to the level at the end of March.

- Approval of the PM among women has increased from 46% to 55%, while disapproval has fallen from 42% to 34%.

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Performance of Anthony Albanese

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

	May'21	Apr'21	Mar'21	Feb'21	Jan'21	Dec'20	Nov'20	Oct'20	Sep'20	Aug'20	Jul'20	Jun'20
TOTAL: Approve	**39%**	39%	41%	40%	42%	43%	40%	44%	44%	44%	44%	43%
TOTAL: Disapprove	**35%**	34%	32%	33%	33%	29%	33%	29%	29%	30%	28%	30%
Don't know	**25%**	27%	27%	27%	25%	28%	27%	27%	27%	25%	28%	26%
Base (n)	**1,092**	1,368	1,124	1,109	1,084	1,071	1,010	1,082	1,076	1,010	1,054	1,059

	Total	Federal Voting Intention			
		Labor	Coalition	Greens	TOTAL: Other
Strongly approve	**9%**	13%	8%	5%	11%
Approve	**30%**	45%	21%	42%	27%
Disapprove	**24%**	17%	32%	21%	22%
Strongly disapprove	**12%**	2%	22%	5%	22%
Don't know	**25%**	22%	17%	27%	18%
TOTAL: Approve	**39%**	59%	29%	47%	38%
TOTAL: Disapprove	**35%**	20%	54%	26%	44%
Base (n)	**1,092**	371	400	109	111

-   The Opposition Leader's approval rating is now at 39%, consistent with the level last month (39%).

-   Approval of the Opposition Leader has risen to 59% among Labor voters (from 55% in April) and is at 29% among Coalition voters (33% in April).

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Preferred Prime Minister

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

	May'21	Apr'21	Mar'21	Feb'21	Jan'21	Dec'20	Nov'20	Oct'20	Sep'20	Aug'20	Jul'20	Jun'20
Scott Morrison	**50%**	47%	52%	52%	51%	50%	53%	50%	49%	52%	50%	53%
Anthony Albanese	**24%**	28%	26%	24%	25%	24%	24%	25%	26%	22%	27%	23%
Don't know	**26%**	25%	22%	24%	25%	26%	24%	25%	25%	26%	23%	24%
Base (n)	**1,092**	1,368	1,124	1,109	1,084	1,071	1,010	1,082	1,076	1,010	1,054	1,059

Men	May'21	Apr'21	Mar'21	Feb'21	Jan'21	Dec'20	Nov'20	Oct'20
Scott Morrison	**54%**	53%	52%	54%	53%	54%	54%	52%
Anthony Albanese	**26%**	29%	30%	28%	28%	29%	28%	29%
Don't know	**20%**	18%	19%	19%	19%	17%	19%	19%
Women								
Scott Morrison	**47%**	42%	53%	51%	48%	47%	51%	47%
Anthony Albanese	**22%**	26%	23%	21%	22%	19%	20%	22%
Don't know	**31%**	32%	24%	29%	31%	34%	28%	31%

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May'21	Total	Federal Voting Intention			
		Labor	Coalition	Greens	TOTAL: Other
Scott Morrison	**50%**	32%	83%	29%	34%
Anthony Albanese	**24%**	41%	7%	46%	22%
Don't know	**26%**	26%	9%	25%	44%
Base (n)	**1,092**	371	400	109	111

- Half (50%) of participants believe that Scott Morrison would make a better PM than Anthony Albanese (47% last month).

- Just under a quarter (24%) would prefer the Opposition Leader (28% in April). Just over a quarter (26%) of participants don't know who would make the better PM.

- Preference for Morrison has increased among women to 47% (from 42% last month). Preference is unchanged among men (54% and 53%).

- 41% of Labor voters believe Albanese would make the better PM, a notable drop from levels last month (50%). Just over a third (32%) now think Morrison would make the better leader (27% last month) and about a quarter (26%) don't know.

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Federal Budget expectations

Q The Federal Budget will be announced on Tuesday 11th May. In general, do you expect the Federal Budget will be good or bad for the following?

	May'21				Oct'20			
	TOTAL: Very Good / Good	Neither good, nor bad	TOTAL: Very bad / Bad	Don't know	TOTAL: Very Good / Good	Neither good, nor bad	TOTAL: Very bad / Bad	Don't know
People who are well off	53%	28%	8%	12%	51%	30%	10%	8%
Big business	51%	30%	9%	11%	53%	26%	12%	9%
Small business	44%	28%	17%	11%	44%	26%	23%	7%
The economy overall	41%	33%	16%	10%	34%	27%	32%	7%
Australian families	38%	33%	19%	10%	33%	31%	29%	7%
Women	34%	36%	18%	12%	-	-	-	-
Average working people	32%	32%	25%	10%	30%	29%	34%	6%
Younger Australians	31%	35%	23%	12%	29%	31%	33%	8%
People on lower incomes	30%	27%	33%	11%	30%	23%	40%	6%
Older Australians	29%	28%	32%	11%	31%	28%	34%	7%
You personally	23%	40%	27%	10%	25%	36%	31%	8%

- Over half of people think the upcoming budget will be good / very good for those who are well off (53%) and about half (51%) think it will benefit big business. This is consistent with levels for these measures last budget (51% and 53% respectively).

- Notably, more people now think the upcoming budget will be good / very good for the economy overall (41% from 34% in October) and Australian families (38% from 33%) than the last announcement in October.

- People on lower incomes (33%) and older Australians (32%) are most expected to be worse off following the announcement.

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TOTAL: Very good / Good	Total	Federal Voting Intention			
		Labor	Coalition	Greens	TOTAL: Other
People who are well off	**53%**	60%	47%	70%	62%
Big business	**51%**	57%	49%	62%	57%
Small business	**44%**	40%	60%	32%	40%
The economy overall	**41%**	33%	61%	26%	34%
Australian families	**38%**	32%	54%	29%	38%
Women	**34%**	31%	46%	30%	33%
Average working people	**32%**	25%	47%	26%	34%
Younger Australians	**31%**	25%	44%	23%	27%
People on lower incomes	**30%**	20%	45%	23%	34%
Older Australians	**29%**	25%	38%	35%	26%
You personally	**23%**	16%	32%	22%	26%

- 23% expect to be better off following the budget announcement.

- 32% of Coalition voters think they personally will have a good budget. This is higher than Labor (16%), Greens (22%) and those voting for a minor/independent party (26%).

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Most important areas for increased funding

Q   How important to you is it that each of the following areas receives increased funding in the upcoming Federal Budget?

	TOTAL: Very important / Important	Quite important	TOTAL: Not very important / Not at all important
Improving the quality of aged care	**74%**	20%	**6%**
Services and facilities to improve women's safety	**60%**	30%	**10%**
Promoting the local manufacture of Covid-19 vaccines	**59%**	27%	**14%**
Incentives and support for small businesses	**57%**	34%	**9%**
Early childhood education and care	**55%**	28%	**18%**
Energy transition from fossil fuels to renewables	**51%**	31%	**19%**
Reducing the national deficit	**48%**	34%	**18%**

- Improving the quality of aged care is seen by the majority of Australians to be an important / very important area to receive increased funding in the upcoming Federal Budget (74%). Services and facilities to improve women's safety (60%) comes next, closely followed by promoting the local manufacture of Covid-19 vaccines (59%).

- Reducing the national deficit (48%) and funding for the energy transition from fossil fuels to renewables (51%) are seen as the least important areas for funding.

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TOTAL: Very important / Important	Total	Federal Voting Intention				TOTAL: Labor, Greens, Other
		Labor	Coalition	Greens	TOTAL: Other	
Improving the quality of aged care	**74%**	77%	74%	78%	76%	77%
Services and facilities to improve women's safety	**60%**	63%	58%	72%	62%	64%
Promoting the local manufacture of Covid-19 vaccines	**59%**	61%	65%	56%	54%	59%
Incentives and support for small businesses	**57%**	52%	64%	58%	53%	53%
Early childhood education and care	**55%**	60%	51%	58%	54%	59%
Energy transition from fossil fuels to renewables	**51%**	53%	46%	74%	49%	56%
Reducing the national deficit	**48%**	43%	58%	35%	48%	43%
Base (n)	**1,092**	371	400	109	111	591

- Compared to all other voters, Coalition voters are more likely to think incentives and support for small businesses is an important / very important area for increased funding (53% to 64% respectively), however they are less likely to think the same for early childhood education and care (59% to 51% respectively).

- Coalition voters are more likely to see reducing the national deficit as an important area for increased funding compared to all other voters (58% to 43% respectively).

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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?

	May'21	Oct'20
The government should directly invest in the economy by creating projects and jobs, and raise the standard of living for the majority of workers	**66%**	69%
The government should relax regulation and lower taxes for the wealthy to encourage businesses to grow and create jobs	**17%**	19%
Unsure	**17%**	13%
Base (n)	**1,092**	1,066

- Most Australians' want the government to directly invest in the economy by creating projects and jobs, and raise the standard of living for the majority of workers (66%), rather than relax regulation and lower taxes for the wealthy to encourage businesses to grow and create jobs (17%) to create jobs and grow the economy. This is consistent with levels last October (69% and 19% respectively).

- Slightly more people are now unsure which the best approach is (17% from 13% in October).

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	Total	Federal Voting Intention				TOTAL: Labor, Greens, Other
		Labor	Coalition	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	**66%**	74%	64%	75%	69%	73%
The government should relax regulation and lower taxes for the wealthy to encourage businesses to grow and create jobs	**17%**	13%	23%	15%	17%	14%
Unsure	**17%**	13%	13%	10%	14%	12%
Base (n)	**1,092**	371	400	109	111	591

- The majority of voters of all major parties want the government to directly invest in the economy by creating projects and jobs, and raise the standard of living for the majority of workers.

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Priority for the upcoming budget

Q Which one of the following options is closest to your thinking about what the priority should be of the upcoming budget?

	Total	Gender		Age Group			Federal Voting Intention			
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Labor	TOTAL: Coalition	Greens	TOTAL: Other
The government should prioritise the reduction of national debt by cutting public funding for services	**20%**	24%	16%	27%	21%	13%	15%	22%	25%	33%
The government should prioritise providing support for people and industries struggling because of the pandemic	**80%**	76%	84%	73%	79%	87%	85%	78%	75%	67%
Base (n)	**1,092**	536	556	340	372	380	371	400	109	111

- The majority of Australians think the government should prioritise providing support for people and industries struggling because of the pandemic in the upcoming budget (80%), over the reduction of national debt by cutting public funding for services (20%).

- Preference for providing support for people and industries struggling because of the pandemic is highest among women (84%), those over 55 (87%) and Labor voters (85%).

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Indicators of whether the Australian economy is in a good or poor state

Q Which of the following indicators do you think is the most important when thinking about whether the Australian economy is in a good or poor state?

	May'21	Sep'20	Sep'19
The unemployment rate	25%	39%	25%
The cost of household bills	20%	13%	22%
The size of the national deficit	13%	-	-
The amount of homeless people on the streets	11%	8%	10%
The value of the Australian dollar to international currencies	8%	12%	13%
The gross domestic product per person	7%	7%	8%
The interest rate set by Reserve Bank of Australia	7%	6%	9%
The consumer price index	5%	6%	6%
The number of new shops, restaurants and cafes opening	5%	3%	2%
The size of the national surplus	-	6%	6%
Base (n)	1,092	1,081	1,097

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	Total	Gender		Age Group			Federal Voting Intention			
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Labor	TOTAL: Coalition	Greens	TOTAL: Other
The unemployment rate	**25%**	24%	25%	28%	26%	21%	26%	21%	34%	25%
The cost of household bills	**20%**	19%	21%	18%	20%	21%	21%	19%	18%	18%
The size of the national deficit	**13%**	10%	15%	8%	13%	17%	10%	15%	7%	17%
The amount of homeless people on the streets	**11%**	8%	13%	11%	11%	11%	12%	8%	15%	7%
The value of the Australian dollar to international currencies	**8%**	9%	7%	12%	7%	6%	9%	8%	4%	7%
The gross domestic product per person	**7%**	9%	6%	7%	7%	8%	6%	10%	7%	6%
The interest rate set by Reserve Bank of Australia	**7%**	8%	6%	6%	8%	7%	7%	8%	3%	8%
The consumer price index	**5%**	7%	3%	6%	5%	4%	5%	6%	8%	3%
The number of new shops, restaurants and cafes opening	**5%**	6%	3%	5%	4%	5%	4%	5%	4%	9%
Base (n)	**1,092**	536	556	340	372	380	371	400	109	111

- The unemployment rate is still thought to be the top indicator of the state of the Australian economy, with a quarter of Australians (25%) ranking it as most important.

- Cost of household bills (20%), the size of the national deficit (13%) and levels of homelessness (11%) are also seen to be key indicators of the state of the economy.

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Uptake of a Covid-19 vaccine

Q   The Covid-19 vaccine rollout is underway in Australia.

Once a vaccine becomes available to you, how long would you wait before taking it?

	10/05	26/04	15/03	01/03	18/01	14/12	10/08
I'd get vaccinated as soon as possible / I've already been vaccinated	**44%**	42%	47%	50%	42%	43%	56%
I'd get vaccinated, but wouldn't do it straight away	**42%**	42%	40%	40%	47%	46%	35%
I'd never get vaccinated	**14%**	16%	12%	10%	11%	10%	8%
Base (n)	**1,092**	1,090	1,124	1,074	1,084	1,071	1,010

- 44% of Australians now say they would get vaccinated as soon as possible or they've already been vaccinated (42% in April).

- The proportion of people who say they would get vaccinated but not straight away is unchanged from last month (42%).

- 14% now say they would never get vaccinated.

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	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 / I've already been vaccinated	**44%**	53%	35%	32%	41%	56%	43%	52%	40%	38%
I'd get vaccinated, but wouldn't do it straight away	**42%**	34%	50%	48%	44%	37%	43%	39%	48%	44%
I'd never get vaccinated	**14%**	13%	15%	20%	15%	8%	14%	9%	12%	18%
Base (n)	**1,092**	536	556	340	372	380	371	400	109	111

- Those most likely to get the vaccine immediately or already be vaccinated include men (53%) and those aged over 55 (56%).

- Those voting for independent or minor parties are the most likely to say they would never get vaccinated (18%).

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Views towards measures for people entering Australia from India

Q   To what extent do you support or oppose the following measures for people entering Australia from India?

	TOTAL: Support	TOTAL: Oppose	Strongly support	Somewhat support	Neither support nor oppose	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose
Banning Australian citizens in India from entering the country due to the risk of Covid-19 transmission	**48%**	**27%**	25%	22%	25%	14%	13%
Penalties of $50,000 fine and five years imprisonment for anyone attempting to arrive in Australia from India	**41%**	**33%**	23%	18%	26%	16%	17%
Allowing Australian citizens to return from India provided they complete the necessary quarantine procedures when they arrive	**56%**	**22%**	22%	33%	22%	12%	10%

- Over half of Australians (56%) support allowing Australian citizens to return from India provided they complete the necessary quarantine procedures when they arrive.

- However, just under half (48%) support banning Australian citizens in India from entering the country due to the risk of Covid-19 transmission and 41% support penalties of $50,000 fine and five years imprisonment for anyone attempting to arrive in Australia from India.

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TOTAL: Support	Total	Age Group			Federal Voting Intention				
		18-34	35-54	55+	Labor	TOTAL: Coalition	Greens	TOTAL: Other	TOTAL: Labor, Greens, Other
Banning Australian citizens in India from entering the country due to the risk of Covid-19 transmission	**48%**	37%	54%	51%	46%	56%	43%	47%	46%
Penalties of $50,000 fine and five years imprisonment for anyone attempting to arrive in Australia from India	**41%**	33%	49%	40%	39%	48%	31%	44%	39%
Allowing Australian citizens to return from India provided they complete the necessary quarantine procedures when they arrive	**56%**	49%	54%	62%	58%	56%	64%	51%	58%
Base (n)	**1,092**	340	372	380	371	400	109	111	591

- While support for allowing Australian citizens to return from India provided they complete the necessary quarantine procedures when they arrive is high across age groups, those over 55 are more likely to support this than younger cohorts (62% to 54% and 49% respectively).

- Support for this measure is consistently high across party lines.

- Those 18-34 are much less likely to support banning Australian citizens in India from entering the Australia due to the risk of Covid-19 transmission than older groups (37% to 54% of those 35-54 and 51% of those over 55).

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Concern about military conflict with China

Q In the past month, diplomatic tensions between Australia and China have increased, with Australia investing $750M to improve Australian Defence Force training facilities in the Northern Territory and Defence Minister Peter Dutton saying that a war with China over Taiwan should not "be discounted".

To what extent are you concerned about Australia engaging in a military conflict with China in the near future?

	Total	Gender		Age Group			Federal Voting Intention			
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Labor	TOTAL: Coalition	Greens	TOTAL: Other
Extremely concerned	18%	18%	18%	11%	21%	21%	18%	18%	23%	17%
Very concerned	21%	22%	21%	20%	23%	21%	21%	21%	22%	27%
Fairly concerned	36%	32%	39%	43%	29%	36%	38%	35%	25%	36%
Not very concerned	19%	21%	17%	19%	20%	18%	19%	18%	25%	19%
Not at all concerned	6%	8%	5%	7%	7%	5%	4%	8%	5%	1%
TOTAL: Concerned	39%	40%	39%	31%	44%	41%	39%	39%	45%	44%
TOTAL: Not concerned	25%	28%	22%	26%	27%	23%	23%	26%	31%	21%
Base (n)	1,092	536	556	340	372	380	371	400	109	111

- 39% of Australians are concerned about Australia engaging in a military conflict with China in the near future, with 18% extremely concerned. 36% are fairly concerned, and a quarter (25%) are not concerned.

- Those 18-34 are less likely to be concerned about this than older cohorts (31% to 44% of those 35-54 and 41% those over 55).

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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.

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