

The Essential Report

21 June 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 16th to 20th June 2021 and is based on 1,087 respondents.

The weighting efficiency applied to the results is 94%, which gives an effective sample size of 1,017. The margin of error at this effective sample size is $\pm 3.1\%$ (95% confidence level).

The full 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.

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?

	Jun'21	Jan'21	Jan'20	Nov'19	Mar'19	Oct'18	Sep'17	Aug'16
Climate change is happening and is caused by human activity	56%	58%	56%	61%	62%	63%	64%	57%
We are just witnessing a normal fluctuation in the earth’s climate	27%	32%	32%	28%	27%	25%	24%	26%
Don't know	16%	10%	13%	11%	12%	13%	12%	17%
Base (n)	1,087	1,084	1,081	1,083	1,089	1,027	1,011	1,022

- Over half (56%) of Australians now believe climate change is happening and is caused by human activity, similar to recent results earlier in 2021 (58%) and 2020 (56%)
- The proportion of those who are undecided on the cause of climate change has increased from earlier in the year to 16% (from 10% in January). Less than a third (27%) believe we are just witnessing a normal fluctuation in the earth’s climate.



	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	56%	54%	58%	61%	58%	51%	70%	44%	81%	50%
We are just witnessing a normal fluctuation in the earth's climate	27%	33%	22%	19%	27%	35%	19%	40%	14%	36%
Don't know	16%	12%	20%	20%	16%	14%	10%	17%	6%	14%
Base (n)	1,087	527	560	328	374	385	378	407	98	102

- Acceptance that climate change is happening and is caused by human activity is highest among Greens voters (81%) and Labor voters (70%).
- Those who think changes are a normal fluctuation in the earth's climate is highest among Coalition voters (40%), those over 55 (35%) and men (33%).



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?

	Jun'21	Jan'21	Jun'20	Mar'20	Jan'20	Nov'19	Mar'19	Dec'18	Oct'18	Sep'17	Aug'16
Not doing enough	45%	42%	52%	55%	62%	60%	51%	53%	56%	56%	52%
Doing enough	30%	35%	25%	23%	19%	22%	27%	24%	23%	20%	22%
Doing too much	12%	10%	10%	9%	8%	8%	11%	9%	7%	8%	8%
Don't know	13%	13%	13%	13%	11%	10%	12%	14%	13%	16%	18%
Base (n)	1,087	1,084	1,079	1,090	1,081	1,083	1,089	1,032	1,027	1,011	1,022

- Most people think Australia is not doing enough to address climate change (45%), with 12% who think Australia is doing too much to address climate change. Consistent with previous years, 13% don't know.
- Fewer people now think Australia is doing enough to address climate change (30% from 35% in January).



	Total	Gender		Age Group			Federal Voting Intention			
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Labor	TOTAL: Coalition	Greens	TOTAL: Other
Not doing enough	45%	41%	49%	47%	46%	44%	64%	27%	64%	40%
Doing enough	30%	32%	27%	26%	28%	34%	19%	47%	20%	22%
Doing too much	12%	17%	7%	10%	12%	13%	6%	16%	11%	24%
Don't know	13%	9%	16%	16%	14%	9%	12%	10%	5%	14%
Base (n)	1,087	527	560	328	374	385	378	407	98	102

- Greens and Labor voters are now both the most likely to think Australia is not doing enough to address climate change (64% respectively). Labor voters are more likely to think the country is not doing enough compared to earlier in the year (56% in January).
- Compared to other voters, Coalition voters are the most likely to think enough is being done (47%), and those voting for minor or independent parties are the most likely to think Australia is doing too much for climate change (24%).
- Women are more likely to think not enough is being done to address climate change than men (49% to 41% respectively), although men are more likely to think this compared to earlier in the year (36%).



Preferred energy sources for government support

Q As you may be aware, many of Australia’s coal-fired power stations are reaching the end of their operational lives and will soon need to be replaced.

Which of the following would you prefer that the government supported?

	Jun'21	Nov'20	Sep'20
New coal-fired power stations	15%	15%	15%
New gas-fired power stations	12%	14%	15%
Renewable energy solutions (e.g. wind and solar)	73%	71%	70%
Base (n)	1,087	1,034	1,081

- The vast majority of Australians would prefer the government supported renewable energy solutions ahead of coal-fired or gas-fired power stations.
- 73% of people prefer renewable energy solutions to replace coal-fired power stations. Only 12% opt for gas-fired power stations. 15% think Australia should persist with coal-fired power stations.



	Total	Gender		Age Group			Federal Voting Intention			
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Labor	Liberal + National	Greens	TOTAL: Other
New coal-fired power stations	15%	18%	12%	13%	11%	19%	8%	22%	4%	25%
New gas-fired power stations	12%	15%	10%	11%	11%	16%	7%	17%	14%	10%
Renewable energy solutions (e.g. wind and solar)	73%	67%	78%	76%	78%	65%	85%	61%	82%	65%
Base (n)	1,087	527	560	328	374	385	378	407	98	102

- The preference for renewable energy solutions is high across all gender, age and voting demographics.
- Those most supportive of renewable energy solutions include women (78%), those aged under 55 (77%), Labor voters (85%) and Greens voters (82%). The proportion of Labor voters supporting renewable energy solutions has increased from 79% since last November. The majority of Coalition voters would prefer the government to support renewable energy sources over gas or coal (61%).
- While support for new coal-fired and gas-fired power stations is low overall, the highest support for new coal-fired power stations is among Coalition voters and minor or independent party voters (22% and 25% respectively). The highest support for new gas-fired power stations is among Coalition voters and those aged over 55 (17% and 16% respectively).



Agreement with need for Australia to act on climate change

Q Scott Morrison recently attended the G7 summit in the UK along with other world leaders from Japan, France and US, among others.

Climate change was one of the main issues on the agenda. Each G7 nation has signed up to achieving net-zero emissions by 2050 but Australia is yet to do so.

Meanwhile, the European Union has proposed introducing carbon tariffs on products from countries which are not ambitious enough on climate change to force action on cutting emissions.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	TOTAL: Agree	TOTAL: Disagree	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Australia needs to follow other countries' lead and make climate change a priority, or risk being left behind	59%	15%	31%	28%	25%	9%	6%
Australian businesses have the opportunity to develop expertise in renewable energy and innovative technologies that other countries will demand	67%	8%	32%	35%	25%	6%	3%
Australian manufacturing could benefit from cheap electricity if more solar and wind farms were built	65%	10%	34%	31%	25%	6%	4%
Australia cannot afford to be locked out of the EU or other trade markets for failing to adopt a net zero emissions target by 2050	59%	11%	30%	29%	29%	8%	4%



TOTAL: Agree	Total	Gender		Age Group			Federal Voting Intention			
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Labor	TOTAL: Coalition	Greens	TOTAL: Other
Australia needs to follow other countries' lead and make climate change a priority, or risk being left behind	59%	56%	62%	57%	61%	59%	74%	50%	70%	49%
Australian businesses have the opportunity to develop expertise in renewable energy and innovative technologies that other countries will demand	67%	66%	67%	57%	67%	74%	73%	68%	71%	60%
Australian manufacturing could benefit from cheap electricity if more solar and wind farms were built	65%	62%	67%	62%	66%	66%	75%	59%	75%	55%
Australia cannot afford to be locked out of the EU or other trade markets for failing to adopt a net zero emissions target by 2050	59%	60%	58%	54%	59%	64%	69%	55%	66%	53%
Base (n)	1,087	527	560	328	374	385	378	407	98	102

- 67% agree that Australian businesses have the opportunity to develop expertise in renewable energy and innovative technologies that other countries will demand, and 65% agree that Australian manufacturing could benefit from cheap electricity if more solar and wind farms were built. Agreement with these statements is high across all gender, age groups and party lines measured.
- 59% respectively agree that Australia needs to follow other countries' lead and make climate change a priority, or risk being left behind, and Australia cannot afford to be locked out of the EU or other trade markets for failing to adopt a net zero emissions target by 2050. Agreement with these statements is lowest among Coalition voters and minor or independent party voters.



Australia's diplomatic and trade relationship with other countries

Q In terms of diplomatic & trade relationships, for each of the following countries please indicate whether you think Australia should be working more closely with them, less closely with them or stay about the same as now?

TOTAL: Get closer	Jun'21	Dec'20
New Zealand	50%	49%
United Kingdom	44%	38%
The European Union	37%	33%
United States	32%	28%
China	12%	15%

TOTAL	Get closer	Stay the same	Become less close	Don't know
New Zealand	50%	34%	6%	10%
United Kingdom	44%	35%	8%	12%
The European Union	37%	41%	9%	13%
United States	32%	42%	14%	11%
China	12%	24%	51%	13%

TOTAL: Get closer	Total	Gender		Age Group			Federal Voting Intention			
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Labor	TOTAL: Coalition	Greens	TOTAL: Other
New Zealand	50%	49%	50%	43%	48%	57%	58%	46%	48%	48%
United Kingdom	44%	47%	41%	32%	38%	61%	47%	51%	24%	46%
The European Union	37%	40%	34%	29%	35%	45%	43%	33%	40%	35%
United States	32%	37%	26%	22%	29%	42%	33%	38%	15%	34%
China	12%	16%	9%	14%	13%	10%	16%	10%	20%	8%
Base (n)	1,087	527	560	328	374	385	378	407	98	102

- New Zealand still remains Australians’ preferred diplomatic and trading partner (50% wanting closer ties), followed by the UK (44% closer ties, an increase from 38% in December), the EU (37%), and the US (32%).
- Only 12% of Australians want closer ties with China – half (50%) want Australia to become less close with China, and a further quarter (24%) think our relationship with China should stay the same at most. 13% don’t know.



Influence of China

Q Thinking about Australia’s relationship with **China**, how do you rate the influence of **China** on each of the following aspects?

	TOTAL: Positive	TOTAL: Negative	Very positive	Somewhat positive	Somewhat negative	Very negative	Unsure
Australia’s defence, military, and national security	26%	51%	8%	18%	24%	27%	22%
Australia’s international trade	28%	55%	8%	20%	25%	29%	17%
Australia’s culture	32%	46%	9%	24%	25%	22%	21%
Australia’s politics	21%	57%	7%	14%	28%	29%	21%
Chinese corporations and businesses operating in Australia	22%	60%	5%	17%	27%	33%	19%

TOTAL: Positive influence	Jun’21	May’20	Aug’19
Australia’s defence, military, and national security	26%	25%	33%
Australia’s international trade	28%	28%	59%
Australia’s culture	32%	35%	43%
Australia’s politics	21%	23%	30%
Chinese corporations and businesses operating in Australia	22%	22%	41%
Base (n)	1,087	1,087	1,096



TOTAL: Positive influence	Total	Gender		Age Group			Federal Voting Intention			
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Labor	TOTAL: Coalition	Greens	TOTAL: Other
Australia's defence, military, and national security	26%	34%	19%	35%	28%	17%	27%	29%	27%	16%
Australia's international trade	28%	34%	22%	36%	31%	18%	30%	30%	30%	15%
Australia's culture	32%	35%	30%	36%	36%	26%	37%	33%	35%	19%
Australia's politics	21%	27%	16%	26%	26%	12%	20%	26%	21%	13%
Chinese corporations and businesses operating in Australia	22%	28%	16%	31%	23%	12%	24%	23%	26%	11%
Base (n)	1,087	527	560	328	374	385	378	407	98	102

- Compared to August 2019, Australians are less likely to rate China's influence on Australia as positive – particularly in international trade (from 59% to 28%), and Chinese corporations operating in Australia (from 41% to 22%).



Influence of the US

Q Thinking about Australia’s relationship with the **United States of America**, how do you rate the influence of the **United States of America** on each of the following aspects?

	TOTAL: Positive	TOTAL: Negative	Very positive	Somewhat positive	Somewhat negative	Very negative	Unsure
Australia’s defence, military, and national security	63%	19%	21%	42%	12%	7%	18%
Australia’s international trade	59%	19%	14%	45%	13%	6%	22%
Australia’s culture	49%	33%	13%	37%	22%	10%	18%
Australia’s politics	47%	31%	11%	35%	20%	11%	23%
American corporations and businesses operating in Australia	53%	26%	12%	41%	19%	7%	21%

TOTAL: Positive influence	Jun’21	May’20	Aug’19
Australia’s defence, military, and national security	63%	54%	65%
Australia’s international trade	59%	48%	56%
Australia’s culture	49%	43%	51%
Australia’s politics	47%	41%	43%
American corporations and businesses operating in Australia	53%	47%	57%
Base (n)	1,087	1,087	1,096



TOTAL: Positive influence	Total	Gender		Age Group			Federal Voting Intention			
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Labor	TOTAL: Coalition	Greens	TOTAL: Other
Australia's defence, military, and national security	63%	67%	60%	51%	62%	74%	65%	77%	42%	54%
Australia's international trade	59%	62%	56%	48%	60%	69%	59%	73%	36%	56%
Australia's culture	49%	50%	48%	42%	53%	52%	48%	62%	27%	46%
Australia's politics	47%	50%	43%	36%	49%	53%	44%	63%	25%	38%
American corporations and businesses operating in Australia	53%	58%	48%	43%	55%	60%	53%	65%	35%	45%
Base (n)	1,087	527	560	328	374	385	378	407	98	102

- Australians are as likely as they were in August 2019 to rate the US as a positive influence on Australia. The biggest increases to the positive influence of the US were defence, military and national security (63%, from 54%), and Australia's international trade (59%, from 48%).



Most beneficial country to strengthen our relationship with

- Q Given the choice between the United States of America and China, with which country do you think it would be most beneficial for Australia to strengthen our relationship?

	Jun'21	May'20	Aug'19
United States of America	57%	42%	38%
China	14%	18%	28%
Neither	15%	24%	18%
Don't know	14%	16%	15%
Base (n)	1,087	1,087	1,096

- 57% of Australians now think it would be most beneficial to strengthen our relationship with the US, a proportion that has been increasing since August 2019.
- Only 14% think Australia should strengthen our relationship with China over the US (a decrease from 28% in 2019). A further 15% think Australia should strengthen our relationship with neither country, and a similar proportion (14%) don't know.

TOTAL	Total	Gender		Age Group			Federal Voting Intention			
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Labor	TOTAL: Coalition	Greens	TOTAL: Other
United States of America	57%	62%	52%	44%	57%	69%	55%	69%	37%	61%
China	14%	14%	13%	18%	13%	11%	16%	11%	24%	9%
Neither	15%	15%	15%	19%	17%	10%	17%	10%	19%	23%
Don't know	14%	9%	20%	20%	13%	10%	12%	10%	21%	7%
Base (n)	1,087	527	560	328	374	385	378	407	98	102

- Across party lines, all voters are now more likely to think we should strengthen our relationship with the US compared to last May.



Views towards Victorian Covid-19 outbreaks and the hotel quarantine system

Q Which of the following statements about the Covid-19 outbreaks in Victoria and the hotel quarantine system is closest to your view?

	Total	Gender		Age Group			Federal Voting Intention			
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Labor	TOTAL: Coalition	Greens	TOTAL: Other
The Covid-19 outbreaks in Victoria are due to mistakes in the local handling of hotel quarantine and returning travellers	41%	43%	39%	45%	39%	39%	31%	49%	37%	48%
The Covid-19 outbreaks in Victoria are due to the fact that hotels are not designed as quarantine facilities and are not suitable as a long-term solution for quarantining returning travellers	59%	57%	61%	55%	61%	61%	69%	51%	63%	52%
Base (n)	1,087	527	560	328	374	385	378	407	98	102

- 59% of Australians think the Covid-19 outbreaks in Victoria are due to the fact that hotels are not designed as quarantine facilities and are not suitable as a long-term solution for quarantining returning travellers. Labor voters and Greens voters are most likely to hold this view (69% and 63% respectively).
- 41% think the Covid-19 outbreaks in Victoria are due to mistakes in the local handling of hotel quarantine and returning travellers. Coalition and minor or independent party voters are most likely to think this (49% and 48% respectively).



Preferred long-term approach to Australia’s quarantine system

Q Which of the following do you think should be Australia’s long-term approach to safely quarantining international travellers?

	Total	Gender		Age Group			Federal Voting Intention			
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Labor	TOTAL: Coalition	Greens	TOTAL: Other
Hotel quarantine	9%	9%	8%	14%	9%	5%	7%	12%	9%	6%
Purpose-built quarantine facilities	65%	60%	71%	49%	64%	80%	75%	64%	57%	62%
Home quarantine	16%	21%	11%	22%	16%	10%	12%	16%	23%	19%
Unsure	10%	10%	10%	15%	11%	5%	6%	8%	11%	13%
Base (n)	1,087	527	560	328	374	385	378	407	98	102

- The majority (65%) of Australians think purpose-built quarantine facilities should be Australia’s long-term approach to safely quarantining international travellers. While this is the majority view across all demographics measured, women (71%), those aged over 55 (80%), and Labor voters (75%) are the most likely to think purpose-built quarantine facilities are the way forward.
- Only 9% think hotel quarantine should be the long-term solution. 16% think home quarantine is the best approach, and 10% are unsure.



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 run by Essential Research with sample provided by Qualtrics from online panels.

The online omnibus is active from the Wednesday night of each week and closed on the following Sunday. The target population is all Australian residents aged 18+. Participants were invited to participate and completed the survey online without an interviewer present and incentives were offered for participation.

The response rate varies each week, but usually delivers 1000+ interviews. Quotas are applied to be representative of the target population by age, gender and location.

RIM weighting is applied to the data using information sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC). The factors used in the weighting are age, gender, location and party ID.

Information for the weighting efficiency, effective sample size and margin of error for each poll (from June 2021) can be found here: <https://essentialvision.com.au/about-this-poll>

Each fortnight, the team at Essential Media Communications discusses 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. Full text for standard voting and regular political preferences can be found in the link above. No questions were asked prior to these questions which have material influence on results.

Participants not eligible to vote in federal elections (either for age, residency or other reasons) are excluded from voting intention. Eligible participants are able to select 'Unsure' for voting intention. They were then asked a 'leaner' question which also included an 'Unsure' option. Participants answering 'Unsure' are NOT excluded from published results, or any subsequent questions. 2 party preferred (2PP) calculations use stated preference. Preference flows from previous federal and state elections are only used for participants answering 'Unsure' for stated preference.

All Essential Research staff hold Research Society membership and are bound by professional codes of behaviour. This research is compliant with the Australian Polling Council Quality Mark standards.

