

The Essential Report

27 September 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 22nd to 26th September 2021 and is based on 1,094 respondents.

The weighting efficiency applied to the results at a national level is 94%, which gives an effective sample size of 1,024. The maximal 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.

Federal government response to Covid-19

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

	27/09	13/09	30/08	16/08	02/08	19/07	05/07	07/06	24/05	12/04	15/03	01/03	15/02
Very poor	12%	16%	16%	13%	16%	13%	12%	10%	6%	7%	5%	6%	5%
Quite poor	18%	20%	20%	22%	19%	19%	17%	14%	12%	10%	7%	8%	7%
Neither good nor poor	25%	21%	24%	24%	28%	23%	26%	22%	25%	21%	18%	24%	19%
Quite good	34%	28%	29%	32%	28%	32%	33%	38%	40%	40%	39%	39%	42%
Very good	11%	15%	10%	9%	10%	14%	11%	15%	18%	22%	31%	23%	27%
TOTAL: Poor	30%	35%	36%	35%	35%	31%	30%	24%	18%	17%	12%	14%	12%
TOTAL: Good	45%	43%	39%	41%	38%	46%	44%	53%	58%	62%	70%	62%	69%
Base (n)	1,094	1,100	1,100	1,100	1,098	1,100	1,099	1,104	1,100	1,368	1,124	1,074	1,109

TOTAL: Good	27/09	13/09	30/08	16/08	02/08	19/07	05/07	07/06	24/05	12/04	15/03	01/03
NSW	48%	41%	34%	34%	39%	49%	44%	62%	56%	66%	69%	64%
VIC	39%	39%	35%	37%	33%	39%	40%	42%	57%	55%	65%	51%
QLD	44%	43%	45%	44%	40%	46%	48%	54%	56%	63%	69%	66%
SA	42%	54%	48%	45%	48%	51%	48%	58%	66%	62%	78%	68%
WA	48%	51%	51%	53%	37%	51%	42%	49%	56%	65%	75%	66%

- 45% of people rate the federal government's response to the Covid-19 outbreak as quite good or very good (up from 39% last month), with 30% rating it as quite poor or very poor.
- Positive rating of the federal government's handling of Covid-19 has increased in NSW to 48%, from 41% a fortnight ago and 34% last month. Positive rating has also dropped in SA to 42%, from 54% last time.



State government response to Covid-19

Q How would you rate your **state government's** response to the Covid-19 outbreak?

TOTAL: Good	27/09	13/09	30/08	16/08	02/08	19/07	05/07	07/06	24/05	12/04	15/03	01/03	15/02
NSW	53%	46%	40%	42%	47%	54%	57%	69%	68%	73%	75%	72%	72%
VIC	44%	50%	44%	56%	54%	49%	50%	48%	63%	58%	62%	49%	59%
QLD	62%	65%	67%	66%	60%	62%	61%	65%	68%	72%	75%	73%	76%
SA	55%	67%	76%	68%	73%	68%	67%	67%	71%	75%	85%	78%	79%
WA	82%	87%	78%	87%	82%	77%	86%	75%	77%	84%	91%	85%	88%

- Positive rating of the state government's response to Covid-19 has increased in NSW from 46% to 53%.
- Rating in Victoria returns to 44% (equal to last month), after being at 50% earlier in September.
- Positive rating of State government has also fallen in SA, from 67% to 55%.



NSW and Victoria Covid-19 roadmaps

Q As you may be aware, the NSW/Victorian government recently announced its roadmap to ease Covid restrictions once vaccination targets are reached.

Thinking about this roadmap out of lockdown, which of the following applies to you?

	NSW	VIC
I understand the plan and have confidence in it	48%	36%
I understand the plan but don't have confidence in it	40%	50%
I'm aware of the plan but don't understand it	8%	11%
I'm not aware of the plan	4%	3%
Base (n)	348	277

- Confidence in re-opening roadmaps is higher in NSW than Victoria.
- 48% of people in NSW understand and have confidence in the state's re-opening plan, compared to 26% in Victoria.
- 40% of people in NSW understand the plan, but aren't confident that it will lead to easing restrictions, compared to 50% of Victorians.



Uptake of a Covid-19 vaccine

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

Which of the following best describes your situation?

	Total	Gender		Age Group			Federal Voting Intention			
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Labor	TOTAL: Coalition	Greens	TOTAL: Other
I've already had the first dose of a Covid-19 vaccine / I've already had both doses of a Covid-19 vaccine	75%	74%	75%	63%	73%	86%	77%	81%	74%	61%
I've booked my vaccination and am waiting to get my first dose of a Covid-19 vaccine	9%	10%	8%	16%	9%	2%	7%	9%	10%	8%
I will get vaccinated but haven't booked my vaccination yet	10%	9%	11%	15%	10%	6%	13%	6%	10%	8%
I'd never get vaccinated	7%	8%	6%	7%	8%	5%	3%	4%	6%	23%
Base (n)	1,094	539	555	341	368	385	366	397	101	130

	State				
	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA
I've already had the first dose of a Covid-19 vaccine / I've already had both doses of a Covid-19 vaccine	83%	77%	67%	60%	70%
I've booked my vaccination and am waiting to get my first dose of a Covid-19 vaccine	7%	9%	8%	15%	11%
I will get vaccinated but haven't booked my vaccination yet	4%	8%	16%	12%	14%
I'd never get vaccinated	6%	6%	9%	13%	4%
Base (n)	348	277	211	89	111



- Uptake of the Covid-19 vaccine continues to increase, with 75% having received at least a first dose. A further 9% are waiting to receive a first dose they have already booked in.
- Overall, 7% of people say they do not intend to get a vaccine, but this is highest among those intending to vote for a minor party at 23% (e.g. One Nation or UAP) or an independent candidate at the next federal election.



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?

	Sep '21	June '21
Hotel quarantine	6%	9%
Purpose-built quarantine facilities	49%	65%
Home quarantine	32%	16%
Unsure	13%	10%
Base (n)	1,094	1,087

	Total	Gender		Age Group			Federal Voting Intention			
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Labor	TOTAL: Coalition	Greens	TOTAL: Other
Hotel quarantine	6%	7%	5%	12%	6%	2%	6%	6%	8%	8%
Purpose-built quarantine facilities	49%	47%	51%	37%	43%	64%	50%	54%	47%	37%
Home quarantine	32%	35%	30%	35%	37%	25%	34%	31%	35%	37%
Unsure	13%	11%	15%	17%	14%	8%	10%	8%	10%	18%
Base (n)	1,094	539	555	341	368	385	366	397	101	130



- There has been a shift in attitudes towards quarantine requirements in the past three months. Preference for international travellers to stay in home quarantine has doubled since June, from 16% to 32%.
- Meanwhile, those preferring purpose-built quarantine facilities has declined from 65% to 49%, though this remains the most preferred solution.
- Switching preference from purpose-built quarantine to at-home is seen across all demographics, for example with both men and women are less likely to prefer purpose-built quarantine facilities (men falling from 60% to 47% and women from 71% to 51%).
- There continues to be little support for hotel quarantine as a long-term solution, with just 6% selecting this option (9% in June).



Party trust to handle issues

Q Which party would you trust most to handle the following issues?

	Liberal	Labor	Unsure	Difference	Difference Oct'19
National Security	41%	28%	32%	+13	+17
Management of the economy	41%	31%	29%	+10	+15
Maintaining international relations	37%	32%	31%	+5	N/A
Ensuring the quality of Australia's health system	35%	38%	27%	-3	-9
Ensuring a quality education for all children	34%	38%	28%	-4	-7
Housing affordability	29%	38%	33%	-9	-7
Protecting Australian jobs and protection of local industries	32%	41%	26%	-9	-9
Addressing climate change	26%	39%	35%	-13	-15
Fair wages and workplace conditions	28%	46%	27%	-18	-19
Base (n)	1,094	1,094	1,094		1,033

- The Liberal party is most trusted to handle national security (41%, 13pts higher than Labor), manage the economy (41%, 10pts higher than Labor) and maintain international relations (37%, 5pts ahead of Labor).
- Labor are most trusted to handle fair wages and workplace conditions (46%, 18pt ahead of Liberals), address climate change (39%, 13pts ahead of Liberals), protect Australian jobs and local industries (41%, 9pts over Liberals) and increase housing affordability (38%, 9pts over Liberals).
- There is little difference in trust between the two major parties to ensure the quality of healthcare or education systems.
- The difference in trust between the parties is mostly similar to last time this was tested in October 2019.



Support for nuclear energy in Australia

Q To what extent do you support or oppose Australia developing nuclear power plants for the generation of electricity?

	Total	Gender		Age Group			Federal Voting Intention			
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Labor	TOTAL: Coalition	Greens	TOTAL: Other
Strongly support	20%	29%	10%	14%	19%	25%	16%	30%	12%	20%
Somewhat support	30%	30%	30%	33%	27%	31%	26%	35%	26%	27%
Somewhat oppose	15%	14%	16%	19%	14%	13%	19%	12%	13%	13%
Strongly oppose	17%	16%	17%	14%	21%	16%	20%	8%	37%	24%
Unsure	18%	10%	27%	21%	18%	16%	19%	15%	11%	15%
TOTAL: Support	50%	59%	41%	47%	47%	55%	42%	65%	38%	47%
TOTAL: Oppose	32%	31%	33%	32%	35%	28%	39%	20%	50%	37%
Base (n)	1,094	539	555	341	368	385	366	397	101	130

- Half of Australians say they would support Australia developing nuclear power-plants, but a third would oppose. The issue is divisive, with similar proportion of people strongly supporting (20%) and strongly opposing (17%) nuclear power in Australia.
- Support for nuclear power is highest among men (59%), those aged over 55 (55%) and Coalition voters (65%).



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?

	Total	Gender		Age Group			Federal Voting Intention			TOTAL: Other
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Labor	Liberal + National	Greens	
Renewable energy solutions (e.g. wind and solar)	65%	52%	77%	61%	72%	60%	76%	51%	79%	54%
New nuclear power stations	19%	28%	10%	17%	15%	25%	12%	28%	11%	19%
New coal-fired power stations	8%	8%	9%	11%	8%	7%	5%	11%	3%	14%
New gas-fired power stations	8%	12%	4%	11%	5%	8%	7%	9%	7%	12%
Base (n)	1,094	539	555	341	368	385	366	397	101	130

- Renewable energy is the preferred power for the future for the majority of Australians (65%).
- One in five (20%) say they want the government to prioritise support for nuclear power.
- Fossil fuels receive little support – with just 8% wanting government support for coal or gas.
- The majority of all demographics want the government to prioritise support for renewables.



Support for uses of nuclear technology

Q To what extent would you support or oppose using nuclear energy sources for the following?

	TOTAL: Support	TOTAL: Oppose	Strongly support	Somewhat support	Neither support nor oppose	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose
To power a submarine fleet for the Royal Australian Navy	47%	21%	22%	24%	32%	11%	10%
To establish Australia's nuclear weapon capabilities	29%	38%	11%	19%	33%	16%	22%
To supply power to Australian households and businesses	48%	24%	22%	26%	29%	10%	13%

	TOTAL: Support	Total	Gender		Age Group			Federal Voting Intention			
			Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Labor	TOTAL: Coalition	Greens	TOTAL: Other
To power a submarine fleet for the Royal Australian Navy	47%		56%	38%	38%	43%	58%	39%	66%	29%	45%
To establish Australia's nuclear weapon capabilities	29%		37%	22%	32%	30%	26%	26%	38%	25%	32%
To supply power to Australian households and businesses	48%		57%	38%	44%	47%	51%	41%	63%	34%	47%
Base (n)		1,094	539	555	341	368	385	366	397	101	130



- Following the AUKUS submarine partnership announcement last week, 47% say they support the use of nuclear power to fuel vessels for the Royal Australian Navy. A similar proportion support the introduction of nuclear power generation (47%).
- There is less enthusiasm for nuclear weapons, with less than a third (29%) supporting this, and higher opposition to the idea of Australia developing nuclear weapons (37%).
- Those most likely to be supportive of all forms of nuclear technology are men and Coalition voters. Older people are more supportive than younger people of nuclear submarines and power generation.



Agreement with AUKUS implications

Q Australia recently announced a trilateral partnership with the US and UK (known as AUKUS) which will deliver a fleet of nuclear-powered submarines for Australia.

The new security pact sees Australia cancel its previous deal with France’s Naval Group to build conventionally powered submarines.

How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the new AUKUS nuclear-powered submarine partnership?

	TOTAL: Agree	TOTAL: Disagree	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Australia is right to build strong relations with the US and UK for its national defence	62%	8%	33%	29%	30%	5%	3%
The AUKUS partnership strains Australia’s trade relations with China who see it as a threat	55%	8%	20%	35%	37%	5%	3%
The AUKUS partnership may endanger future trade deals with France and the EU	48%	13%	16%	32%	39%	9%	4%
The AUKUS partnership is in Australia’s best security and economic interests	54%	12%	26%	28%	34%	7%	5%



	Total	Gender		Age Group			Federal Voting Intention			
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Labor	TOTAL: Coalition	Greens	TOTAL: Other
Australia is right to build strong relations with the US and UK for its national defence	62%	68%	56%	49%	58%	77%	59%	78%	44%	58%
The AUKUS partnership strains Australia's trade relations with China who see it as a threat	55%	61%	49%	49%	54%	61%	57%	57%	65%	55%
The AUKUS partnership may endanger future trade deals with France and the EU	48%	49%	47%	47%	47%	49%	53%	47%	64%	48%
The AUKUS partnership is in Australia's best security and economic interests	54%	62%	46%	45%	50%	66%	49%	72%	36%	47%
Base (n)	1,094	539	555	341	368	385	366	397	101	130

- While 62% think it is good for Australia to strengthen relations with the US and UK through the AUKUS partnership, 55% acknowledge it will strain the trading relationship with China and 48% see the risk to relationships with France and other EU countries.
- Just over half think the AUKUS partnership is in Australia's best economic and security interests (54%).
- The partnership appeals to Coalition voters, who are most likely to think it is right to build strong relations with the UK and US (78%) and agree that the deal is in Australia's best interests (72%).



National security and AUKUS partnership

Q Thinking about the AUKUS nuclear-powered submarine partnership, which 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
The AUKUS nuclear-powered submarine partnership will make Australia more secure	45%	47%	44%	34%	40%	60%	39%	62%	30%	38%
The AUKUS nuclear-powered submarine partnership will not affect Australia's security	36%	34%	37%	48%	36%	24%	39%	27%	40%	33%
The AUKUS nuclear-powered submarine partnership will make Australia less secure	19%	19%	19%	18%	24%	15%	22%	12%	30%	29%
Base (n)	1,094	539	555	341	368	385	366	397	101	130

- Less than half think the AUKUS partnership will make Australia more secure (45%). 36% think it will not affect our security and 19% think we are now at more risk.
- Those aged over 55 and Coalition voters are most likely to believe Australia is now more secure due to the AUKUS partnership.



Managing Australia’s relationship with China

Q Overall, which is closest to your view about Australia's relationship with China?

	Total	Gender		Age Group			Federal Voting Intention			
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Labor	TOTAL: Coalition	Greens	TOTAL: Other
Australia’s relationship with China is a positive opportunity to be realised	10%	13%	7%	14%	11%	6%	11%	10%	12%	8%
Australia’s relationship with China is a complex relationship to be managed	66%	63%	69%	65%	64%	70%	66%	66%	66%	61%
Australia’s relationship with China is a threat to be confronted	24%	24%	23%	21%	25%	24%	23%	24%	21%	31%
Base (n)	1,094	539	555	341	368	385	366	397	101	130

- Over twice as many people think Australia’s relationship with China is a threat to be confronted than a positive opportunity to be realised (24% to 10%). However most believe it is a complex relationship to be managed.
- Younger people aged 18-34 are more likely to see the opportunity for a positive relationship with China than those aged over 55 (14% to 6%).



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.

