

The Essential Report

14 February 2017



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Prepared By: Essential Research

Data Supplied by:



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Our researchers are members of the Australian Market and Social Research Society.

About this poll

This report summarises the results of a weekly omnibus conducted by Essential Research with data provided by Your Source. The survey was conducted online from the 9th to 12th February 2017 and is based on 1,017 respondents.

Aside from the standard question on voting intention, this week's report includes questions on party leaders, Cory Bernardi and Government regulation.

The methodology used to carry out this research is described in the appendix on page 13.

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 today to which party will you probably give your first preference vote? If not sure, which party are you currently leaning toward? If don't know - Well which party are you currently leaning to?

	Total	Last week 7/2/17	2 weeks ago 31/1/17	Election 2 Jul 16
Liberal	34%	33%	32%	
National	3%	2%	3%	
Total Liberal/National	36%	36%	35%	42.0%
Labor	35%	37%	37%	34.7%
Greens	9%	8%	9%	10.2%
Nick Xenophon Team	3%	3%	3%	
Pauline Hanson's One Nation	10%	10%	10%	
Other/Independent	6%	6%	6%	13.1%
2 party preferred				
Liberal National	48%	47%	46%	50.4%
Labor	52%	53%	54%	49.6%

NB. Sample = 1,793. The data in the above tables comprise 2-week averages derived from the first preference/leaning to voting questions. Respondents who select 'don't know' are not included in the results. The two-party preferred estimate is calculated by distributing the votes of the other parties according to their preferences at the 2016 election.

Approval of Malcolm Turnbull

Q Do you approve or disapprove of the job Malcolm Turnbull is doing as Prime Minister?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other	Dec 2015	Mar 2016	Jun 2016	Sep 2016	Dec 2016	Jan 2017
Total approve	34%	15%	70%	19%	19%	56%	45%	38%	35%	34%	37%
Total disapprove	49%	70%	19%	69%	70%	23%	35%	40%	43%	46%	48%
Strongly approve	5%	4%	9%	1%	2%	13%	6%	6%	4%	5%	6%
Approve	29%	11%	61%	18%	17%	43%	39%	32%	31%	29%	31%
Disapprove	28%	35%	15%	36%	38%	16%	24%	24%	27%	30%	30%
Strongly disapprove	21%	35%	4%	33%	32%	7%	11%	16%	16%	16%	18%
Don't know	16%	14%	10%	11%	11%	21%	21%	21%	22%	20%	16%

34% (down 3% from 4 weeks ago) of respondents approve of the job Malcolm Turnbull is doing as Prime Minister and 49% (up 1%) disapprove – a change in net approval rating from -11 to -15. This is Malcolm Turnbull's worst net rating as Prime Minister.

70% (down 6%) of Liberal/National voters approve of Malcolm Turnbull's performance with 19% (up 2%) disapproving. 15% (down 5%) of Labor voters and 19% (up 6%) of Greens voters approve of Malcolm Turnbull's performance.

By gender, men were 38% approve/52% disapprove and women 31% approve/47% disapprove.

Approval of Bill Shorten

Q Do you approve or disapprove of the job Bill Shorten is doing as Opposition Leader?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other	Nov 2013	Dec 2014	Dec 2015	Mar 2016	Jun 2016	Sep 2016	Dec 2016	Jan 2017
Total approve	30%	63%	18%	37%	12%	31%	35%	27%	27%	34%	36%	35%	37%
Total disapprove	47%	16%	66%	47%	72%	27%	39%	47%	47%	40%	41%	38%	44%
Strongly approve	5%	16%	1%	4%	<1%	5%	7%	4%	3%	7%	6%	6%	7%
Approve	25%	47%	17%	33%	12%	26%	28%	23%	24%	27%	30%	29%	30%
Disapprove	27%	13%	32%	38%	36%	17%	23%	26%	29%	22%	24%	21%	25%
Strongly disapprove	20%	3%	34%	9%	36%	10%	16%	21%	18%	18%	17%	17%	19%
Don't know	22%	21%	15%	15%	16%	43%	26%	25%	26%	25%	22%	25%	20%

30% (down 7% in last 4 weeks) of respondents approve of the job Bill Shorten is doing as opposition leader and 47% (up 3%) disapprove – a change in his net rating from -7 to -17. This is Bill Shorten's worst net rating since March 2016.

63% (down 3%) of Labor voters approve of the job Bill Shorten is doing and 16% (down 3%) disapprove.

36% of men and 26% of women approve of Bill Shorten. 51% of men and 44% of women disapprove.

Better Prime Minister

Q Who do you think would make the better Prime Minister out of Malcolm Turnbull and Bill Shorten?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other	Sep 2015	Dec 2015	Mar 2016	Jun 2016	Sep 2016	Oct 2016	Nov 2016	Dec 2016	Jan 2017
Malcolm Turnbull	39%	11%	81%	17%	33%	53%	54%	48%	40%	41%	41%	40%	39%	39%
Bill Shorten	25%	62%	4%	38%	10%	17%	15%	19%	29%	26%	28%	28%	28%	28%
Don't know	36%	27%	16%	45%	56%	30%	31%	33%	32%	33%	31%	32%	33%	33%

39% (no change in last 4weeks) of respondents think Malcolm Turnbull would make the better Prime Minister and 25% (down 3%) think Bill Shorten would make the better Prime Minister.

43% of men prefer Malcolm Turnbull and 26% prefer Bill Shorten.

35% of women prefer Malcolm Turnbull and 24% prefer Bill Shorten.



Cory Bernardi

Q The Liberal Party Senator, Cory Bernardi, has announced he will leave the Liberal Party and remain in Parliament as a member of a new party, the Australian Conservatives. Do you think Senator Bernardi leaving the Liberals is good or bad for the Liberal Party?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other
Good for the Liberal Party	17%	19%	23%	23%	11%
Bad for the Liberal Party	26%	30%	28%	24%	29%
Neither	29%	28%	31%	26%	33%
Don't know	28%	23%	18%	27%	27%

26% think that Cory Bernardi leaving the Liberal party is bad for the Liberal Party and 17% think it is good for the Liberal Party. 29% think it is neither and 28% don't know.

Among Liberal/National voters 28% think it is bad for the party and 23% good.



Likelihood of voting for Australian Conservatives

Q How likely would you be to vote for this new party, the Australian Conservatives – in a future Federal election?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other
Total likely	14%	13%	18%	9%	16%
Total not likely	62%	66%	63%	82%	60%
Very likely	3%	4%	4%	1%	3%
Somewhat likely	11%	9%	14%	8%	13%
Not very likely	16%	14%	21%	9%	18%
Not at all likely	46%	52%	42%	73%	42%
Don't know	25%	21%	19%	9%	24%

14% say they would be likely to vote for the Australian Conservatives and 62% say they would be unlikely to vote for them.

Among Liberal/National voters 18% say they would be likely to vote for the Australian Conservatives.

A similar question (asked in December last year) about a new conservative party which included Tony Abbott produced a voting intention of 23% likely (including 41% of Liberal/National voters), 58% not likely.

Government regulation

Q Overall, do you think Australia has too much or not enough Government regulation?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other
Has too much regulation	33%	33%	31%	20%	52%
Has not enough regulation	19%	19%	22%	26%	18%
Has about the right amount of regulation	27%	28%	33%	28%	15%
Don't know	22%	20%	15%	26%	15%

33% think that Australia has too much Government regulation and 19% think there is not enough regulation. 27% think there is the right amount and 22% don't know.

There is little difference between the views of Liberal/National and Labor voters. However, 52% of other voters think there is too much regulation while Greens voters (20%) are less inclined to think there is too much.

Types of Government regulation

Q Do you think there needs to be more or less Government regulation of the following, or is the current regulation about right?

	More regulation	Less regulation	Current regulation about right	Don't know
Air and water quality	38%	7%	37%	17%
Environmental protection laws	44%	12%	30%	14%
Public health standards	44%	10%	34%	12%
Educational regulations – eg teacher standards,	47%	11%	28%	14%
National security measures such as anti-terrorism laws	47%	10%	29%	14%
Child safety regulations	45%	9%	32%	13%
Traffic regulations	22%	23%	43%	12%
Alcohol regulations such as lock-out laws	30%	24%	32%	13%
Anti-discrimination regulations	32%	17%	37%	14%
Regulations on use of public space	18%	24%	41%	18%
Development regulation – eg zoning and DAs	27%	21%	33%	20%
Professional standards – eg electrician licensing	33%	10%	41%	16%
Laws prohibiting particular drugs	42%	21%	24%	14%
Consumer protection regulation	42%	8%	35%	16%

Close to half the respondents think there needs to be more regulation of education (47%), national security (47%), child safety (45%), public health (44%) and the environment (44%).

They are more likely to think there is enough regulation of traffic (43%), use of public space (41%) and professional standards (41%).



Appendix: Methodology, margin of error and professional standards

The data gathered for this report is gathered from a weekly online omnibus conducted by Your Source. Essential Research has been utilizing the Your Source online panel to conduct research on a week-by-week basis since November 2007.

Each week, 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 media and social issues that are present at the time.

Your Source has a self-managed consumer online panel of over 100,000 members. The majority of panel members have been recruited using off line methodologies, effectively ruling out concerns associated with online self-selection.

Your Source has validation methods in place that prevent panelist over use and ensure member authenticity. Your Source randomly selects 18+ males and females (with the aim of targeting 50/50 males/females) from its Australia wide panel. An invitation is sent out to approximately 7000 – 8000 of their panel members.

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 best guide to a poll's accuracy is to look at the record of the polling company - how have they performed at previous elections or other occasions where their estimates can be compared with known population figures. In the last poll before the 2016 election, the Essential Report estimates of first preference votes averaged less than 1% difference from the election results and the two-party preferred difference was only 0.1%.

The Your Source online omnibus is live from the Wednesday night of each week and closed on the following Sunday. Incentives are offered to participants in the form of points. 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 and senior Your Source staff hold Australian Market and Social Research Society (AMSRS) membership and are bound by professional codes of behaviour. Your Source is an Australian social and market research company specializing in recruitment, field research, data gathering and data analysis. Essential Research is a member of the Association Market and Social Research Organisations (AMSRO). Your Source holds Interviewer Quality Control Australia (IQCA) accreditation, Association Market and Social Research Organisations (AMSRO) membership and World Association of Opinion and Marketing Research Professionals (ESOMAR) membership.

