

# The Essential Report

28 March 2017



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**Prepared By:** Essential Research

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**Data Supplied by:**



Essential Media Communications is a member of the Association of Market and Social Research Organisations



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 124<sup>h</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> March 2017 and is based on 1,016 respondents.

Aside from the standard question on voting intention, this week's report includes questions on racial discrimination, Government priorities, international relations, the Snowy Hydro and leadership characteristics.

The methodology used to carry out this research is described in the appendix on page 14.

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 21/3/17	2 weeks ago 14/3/17	4 weeks ago 28/2/17	Election 2 Jul 16
Liberal	32%	31%	32%	34%	
National	3%	3%	3%	3%	
<b>Total Liberal/National</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>42.0%</b>
<b>Labor</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>34.7%</b>
Greens	10%	9%	9%	9%	10.2%
Nick Xenophon Team	4%	3%	3%	3%	
Pauline Hanson's One Nation	8%	10%	11%	9%	
Other/Independent	7%	6%	6%	6%	13.1%
<b>2 party preferred</b>					
Liberal National	<b>46%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>50.4%</b>
Labor	<b>54%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>49.6%</b>

NB. Sample = 1,808. 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.

## Racial discrimination laws

Q Overall, do you think that laws governing racial discrimination in Australia are too strict, too weak or about right?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other	Nov 2016
Too strict	<b>16%</b>	11%	21%	10%	29%	17%
Too weak	<b>26%</b>	30%	22%	37%	27%	26%
About right	<b>40%</b>	46%	47%	34%	28%	40%
Don't know	<b>18%</b>	13%	11%	19%	15%	17%

40% think Australia current laws governing racial discrimination are about right, 26% think they are too weak and 16% think they are too strict. These results are almost unchanged since this question was asked in November.

Those most likely to think they are too weak were Greens voters (37%) and people aged 18-34 (30%).

Those most likely to think they are too strict were other voters (29%) and aged 55+ (25%).

## Changing Racial Discrimination Act

Q The Racial Discrimination Act makes it an offence to “intimidate, humiliate, offend or insult” someone because of their race or ethnicity. It has been proposed to replace the words “humiliate, offend or insult” with “harass”. This means it will be unlawful to “harass or intimidate” someone because of their race or ethnicity but not unlawful to “humiliate, offend or insult”. Do you approve or disapprove of this change?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other
<b>Total approve</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>45%</b>
<b>Total disapprove</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>33%</b>
Strongly approve	14%	14%	17%	9%	18%
Approve	31%	31%	41%	23%	27%
Disapprove	19%	17%	20%	28%	19%
Strongly disapprove	15%	24%	7%	22%	14%
Don't know	20%	15%	15%	18%	22%

45% approved of changing the Racial Discrimination Act and 34% opposed.

58% of Liberal/National voters approve, 50% of Greens votes disapprove and Labor voters were split 45% approve/41% disapprove.

53% of respondents aged 65+ approved and 39% of those with university education disapproved.



## Government priorities

Q What do you think should be the main priorities for the new Government? (select up to 3)

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other	Jul 2016	Change
Invest more in hospitals and health services	46%	51%	40%	36%	47%	55%	-9
Ensuring big businesses pay their fair share of tax	30%	32%	27%	27%	38%	29%	+1
Do more to address unemployment	26%	28%	26%	11%	30%	25%	+1
Invest more in education	24%	27%	18%	32%	19%	31%	-7
Invest more in renewable energy	23%	22%	22%	45%	17%	17%	+6
Invest more in infrastructure e.g. rail and roads	21%	19%	28%	8%	18%	19%	+2
Cut spending to reduce the deficit	20%	10%	36%	2%	26%	27%	-7
Vote on same sex marriage	19%	23%	14%	35%	13%	15%	+4
Do more to address climate change	16%	19%	10%	41%	7%	13%	+3
Do more to assist first home buyers	15%	15%	15%	12%	13%	12%	+3
More support for local industries	15%	13%	17%	6%	22%	11%	+4
Build the NBN	10%	13%	9%	10%	7%	13%	-3
Cut company tax	3%	1%	5%	1%	4%	4%	-1
Make changes to superannuation	3%	3%	2%	1%	2%	4%	-1



46% thought the one of the Government's main priorities was to invest more in hospitals and health services. Other important priorities were **ensuring big businesses pay their fair share of tax (30%)**, do more to address unemployment (26%), investing more in education (24%) and investing more in renewable energy (23%). Cutting company tax and making changes to superannuation were the least important issues (both 3%).

Main changes since this question was asked last July were increases for investing in renewable energy (up 6%), vote on same sex marriage (up 4%) and more support for local industries (up 4%) and decreases for investing more in hospitals and health (down 9%), investing more in education (down 7%) and cutting spending to reduce the deficit (down 7%).

For Labor voters the main priorities were investing in hospitals and health (51%), ensuring big businesses pay their share of tax (32%), doing more to address unemployment (28%) and investing more in education (27%).

For Liberal/National voters the main priorities were investing in hospitals and health (40%), cutting spending to reduce the deficit (36%) and investing more in infrastructure (28%).

For Greens voters the main priorities were investing more in renewable energy (45%), doing more to address climate change (41%), investing in hospitals and health (36%) and voting on same sex marriage (35%).



## Importance of international relationships

Q How important is it for Australia to have a close relationship with the following nations?

	Very important	Quite important	Not very important	Don't know	Very important Mar 11	Very important Nov 13	Very important Oct 14	Very important Feb 15	Very important May 15	Very important Jul 16	Change
United States	47%	40%	8%	6%	60%	59%	53%	44%	44%	49%	-2
United Kingdom	47%	41%	6%	6%	56%	48%	48%	38%	39%	41%	+6
China	43%	43%	6%	7%	48%	54%	44%	41%	39%	42%	+1
Japan	30%	50%	11%	9%	39%	35%	31%	30%	31%	25%	+5
Indonesia	25%	46%	19%	9%	31%	40%	32%	22%	21%	26%	-1
Canada	25%	49%	17%	9%	na	na	26%	22%	24%	22%	+3
Germany	20%	49%	21%	10%	23%	20%	22%	18%	20%	19%	+1
India	17%	47%	25%	11%	26%	26%	22%	20%	22%	19%	-2
Russia	17%	38%	34%	12%	na	na	16%	11%	13%	17%	-
Saudi Arabia	13%	37%	36%	14%	na	na	17%	12%	14%	13%	-



47% of respondents think it is very important to have a close relationship with the United States and 47% think it is very important to have a close relationship with the United Kingdom and 43% with China. Relations with Russia (17%) and Saudi Arabia (13%) were thought to be the least important.

A close relationship with the United States is considered very important by 59% of Liberal/National voters, 45% of Labor voters and 35% of Greens voters.

Since this question was asked in July last year, the importance of our relationship with the United Kingdom has increased 6% and the importance of our relationship with Japan increased 5%.



## Relationship with USA

Q Do you think Australia's relationship with the United States is becoming better or worse?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other
<b>Total better</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>4%</b>
<b>Total worse</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>40%</b>
Much better	2%	3%	3%	1%	1%
Better	4%	2%	8%	6%	3%
Staying about the same	44%	41%	50%	33%	48%
Worse	35%	40%	30%	51%	34%
Much worse	6%	8%	5%	3%	6%
Don't know	9%	7%	5%	6%	7%

41% think that Australia's relationship with the US is becoming worse, 6% think it is becoming better and 44% think it is staying about the same.

Those most likely to think it is getting worse were Labor voters (48%) and Greens voters (54%).

## Expanding Snowy Hydro

- Q Do you approve or disapprove of the proposal by the Federal Government to invest \$2 billion to expand the Snowy Hydro scheme to increase its electricity production by 50 per cent?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other
<b>Total approve</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>59%</b>
<b>Total disapprove</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>13%</b>
Strongly approve	19%	19%	28%	8%	16%
Approve	40%	38%	44%	37%	43%
Disapprove	8%	9%	7%	11%	9%
Strongly disapprove	4%	5%	1%	8%	4%
Don't know	30%	29%	21%	36%	28%

59% approve of the Federal Government's proposal to expand the Snowy Hydro scheme and 12% disapprove. 30% could not give an opinion.

Those most likely to support the proposal were Liberal/National voters (72%), men (66%) and aged 55+ (73%).

## Important leadership characteristics

Q Which of the following are the most important characteristics you would want to see in Australia’s political leaders? (select up to 3)

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other
Accountable	<b>66%</b>	61%	66%	65%	74%
Realistic	<b>56%</b>	56%	57%	39%	57%
Ethical	<b>49%</b>	47%	47%	72%	43%
Level headed	<b>32%</b>	34%	35%	20%	34%
Objective	<b>25%</b>	20%	31%	21%	25%
Collaborative	<b>21%</b>	26%	16%	32%	13%
Modest	<b>10%</b>	10%	8%	8%	12%
Curious	<b>5%</b>	7%	5%	9%	1%
Humorous	<b>4%</b>	3%	4%	3%	5%

The most important characteristics for Australia’s political leaders were considered to be accountable (66%), realistic (56%) and ethical (49%).

Greens voters were more likely to select “ethical” (72%) and other voters more likely to want leaders to be “accountable” (74%).



## 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.