

# The Essential Report

15 December 2015





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**Prepared by:** Essential Research

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**Data supplied:**



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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 10<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> December and is based on 1,005 respondents.

Aside from the standard question on voting intention, this week's report includes questions on performance of politicians, whether it has been a good or bad year for organisations and groups, expectations for 2016, Joe Hockey, Government spending and Christmas.

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 politics – 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?

Q. If don't know -Well which party are you currently leaning to?

Sample size = 1,764 respondents

First preference/leaning to	Election 7 Sep 13	4 weeks ago 17/11/15	2 weeks ago 1/12/15	Last week 8/12/15	This week 15/12/15
Liberal		41%	41%	41%	42%
National		4%	3%	3%	3%
<b>Total Liberal/National</b>	<b>45.6%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>45%</b>
<b>Labor</b>	<b>33.4%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>35%</b>
Greens	8.6%	10%	11%	11%	10%
Palmer United Party	5.5%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Other/Independent	6.9%	9%	9%	9%	9%

2 Party Preferred	Election 7 Sep 13	4 weeks ago 17/11/15	2 weeks ago 1/12/15	Last week 8/12/15	This week 15/12/15
<b>Liberal National</b>	<b>53.5%</b>	52%	51%	51%	52%
<b>Labor</b>	<b>46.5%</b>	48%	49%	49%	48%

NB. 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 2013 election.

## Performance of politicians

Q. How would you rate the performance of the following politicians?

	Total good	Total poor	Net	Very good	Good	Neither good nor poor	Poor	Very poor	Don't know
Malcolm Turnbull - Prime Minister	50%	17%	+33	15%	35%	29%	9%	8%	5%
Bill Shorten - Opposition leader	14%	44%	-30	2%	12%	36%	20%	24%	6%
Scott Morrison - Treasurer	22%	25%	-3	4%	18%	40%	14%	11%	13%
Clive Palmer - leader of PUP	8%	60%	-52	1%	7%	22%	21%	39%	10%
Richard Di Natale - leader of the Greens	16%	28%	-12	3%	13%	36%	12%	16%	19%
Julie Bishop - Foreign Minister	43%	21%	+22	14%	29%	28%	10%	11%	7%

Two politicians were given net positive ratings for their performance. 50% rated Malcolm Turnbull's performance as good and 17% rated him poor. Julie Bishop achieved ratings of 43% good and 21% poor.

Net ratings for the others were Bill Shorten -30, Scott Morrison -3, Clive Palmer -52 and Richard Di Natale -12.

Malcolm Turnbull had a net rating of +72 with Liberal National voters and +11 with Labor voters. Bill Shorten had a net rating of +7 with Labor voters and -53 with Liberal National voters. Richard Di Natale had a net rating of +43 with Greens voters.

## Last 12 months

Q. Thinking about the last 12 months, has it been a good or bad year for each of the following?

	Total good	Total poor	Net score	Very good	Good	Neither good nor poor	Poor	Very poor	Don't know	Net score Dec 2013	Net score Dec 2014
The Australian economy	23%	34%	-11	3%	20%	39%	28%	6%	5%	-13	-13
Australian politics in general	14%	55%	-41	1%	13%	27%	35%	20%	5%	-62	-53
Large companies and corporations	28%	23%	+5	4%	24%	39%	19%	4%	9%	-9	+14
Small business	21%	33%	-12	2%	19%	37%	26%	7%	9%	-45	-28
Trade unions	11%	38%	-27	2%	9%	35%	25%	13%	15%	-25	-18
The average Australian	21%	35%	-14	2%	19%	40%	27%	8%	5%	-22	-23
Your personal financial situation	24%	30%	-6	3%	21%	42%	19%	11%	3%	-8	-11
Your workplace (employees only)	37%	23%	+14	5%	32%	37%	17%	6%	2%	+8	-5
You and your family overall	40%	19%	+21	5%	35%	38%	14%	5%	2%	+18	+3

Respondents believed that this year has been a poor for all groups except large companies (+5), your workplace (+14) and you and your family overall (+21). It was considered a particularly bad year for Australian politics in general (-41) and trade unions (-27).

Relative to 2014 (as measured in December last year), this year was considered better for politics in general (up 12), small businesses (up 16), your workplace (up 19) and you and your family overall (up 18) but worse for large companies and corporations (down 9) and trade unions (down 9).

## Expectations for 2016

Q. Thinking about the next 12 months, do you think 2016 will be a good or bad year for each of the following?

	Total good	Total poor	Net score	Very good	Good	Neither good nor poor	Poor	Very poor	Don't know	Net score Dec 2013	Net score Dec 2014
The Australian economy	28%	26%	+2	3%	25%	35%	20%	6%	10%	-10	-10
Australian politics in general	26%	31%	-5	2%	24%	32%	22%	9%	10%	-24	-29
Large companies and corporations	32%	18%	+14	4%	28%	38%	14%	4%	13%	-	+13
Small business	26%	23%	+3	2%	24%	37%	18%	5%	13%	-24	-17
Trade unions	15%	31%	-16	2%	13%	37%	21%	10%	17%	-26	-16
The average Australian	24%	26%	-2	1%	23%	39%	20%	6%	10%	-9	-17
Your personal financial situation	33%	21%	+12	4%	29%	39%	13%	8%	8%	+6	-
Your workplace (employees only)	39%	18%	+21	5%	34%	37%	13%	5%	7%	+15	-
You and your family overall	43%	15%	+28	7%	36%	35%	10%	5%	8%	+25	+10

Overall, there was a positive outlook for large companies and corporations (net +14), your personal financial situation (+12), your workplace (+21), and you and your family overall (+28). Expectations were especially negative for trade unions (-16).

Compared to last year, respondents were more optimistic about all items measured except for large companies and corporations (up 1) and trade unions (no difference).

## Joe Hockey as ambassador to US

Q. Do you approve or disapprove of the appointment of the former Treasurer Joe Hockey as Ambassador to the USA?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other
<b>Total approve</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>25%</b>
<b>Total disapprove</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>53%</b>
Strongly approve	5%	3%	8%	2%	6%
Approve	28%	13%	49%	13%	19%
Disapprove	21%	28%	16%	26%	25%
Strongly disapprove	21%	34%	7%	36%	28%
Don't know	26%	22%	20%	23%	22%

33% approve of Joe Hockey's appointment as ambassador to the US and 42% disapprove.

57% of Liberal National voters approve but a majority of Labor voters (62%), Greens voters (62%) and other voters (53%) disapprove.



## Perceptions of Government spending

*Q. As far as you know, is the current Liberal National Government's spending higher or lower than the previous Labor Government or are they spending about the same?*

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other
Higher than previous Labor Government	<b>22%</b>	36%	12%	33%	26%
Lower than previous Labor Government	<b>21%</b>	13%	33%	15%	17%
Spending about the same	<b>23%</b>	22%	27%	22%	22%
Don't know	<b>34%</b>	29%	28%	30%	35%

Perceptions of Government spending varied – 23% thought the Liberal National Government's spending was about the same as the previous Labor Government, 22% thought it was higher and 21% thought it was lower.

Those most likely to think it was higher were Labor voters (36%), Greens voters (33%) and men (28%). 33% of Liberal National voters thought it was lower.

## Concern about Government spending

*Q. In fact, Treasurer Scott Morrison recently said that the Government was spending equivalent to more than 26% of GDP this year. This is a higher level than the Rudd government spent including during the financial crisis.*

*How concerned are you about the current Government's spending?*

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other
Very concerned	<b>26%</b>	32%	17%	34%	40%
Somewhat concerned	<b>39%</b>	41%	44%	39%	30%
Not very concerned	<b>19%</b>	13%	27%	14%	16%
Not at all concerned	<b>4%</b>	2%	6%	5%	2%
Don't know	<b>12%</b>	11%	7%	9%	13%

65% were very or somewhat concerned that Government spending was higher than the Rudd Government's during the financial crisis. 23% were not very or not at all concerned.

73% of Labor voters and Greens voters were very/somewhat concerned compared to 61% of Liberal/National voters. 33% of Liberal National voters were not very or not at all concerned.

## Feelings about Christmas

Q. Which of the following best describes how you feel about Christmas?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other	Men	Women	Aged 18-34	Aged 35-54	Agecd 55+
I enjoy Christmas a lot	<b>36%</b>	38%	41%	32%	32%	32%	40%	40%	34%	36%
I enjoy some things about Christmas	<b>44%</b>	43%	45%	44%	45%	48%	40%	44%	44%	44%
I don't enjoy Christmas at all	<b>6%</b>	7%	4%	12%	10%	5%	8%	6%	7%	7%
I don't really care one way or the other about Christmas	<b>12%</b>	12%	10%	11%	13%	14%	10%	9%	14%	12%
Don't know	<b>1%</b>	*	1%	-	-	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%

36% say they enjoy Christmas a lot and 44% enjoy some things about Christmas.

There were not major differences across demographic groups. Women were a little more likely to say they enjoy it a lot (40%) as were younger respondents (40% of aged 18-34).

16% of those on incomes under \$1,000 pw say they don't care one way or the other.

44% of those with children say they enjoy it a lot compared to 31% of those without children.

## Belief in Santa Claus

Q. Do you or did you encourage your children to believe in Santa Claus/Father Christmas? (Based on those who have children)

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other	Men	Women	Aged 18-34	Aged 35-54	Agecd 55+
Yes	<b>80%</b>	85%	81%	68%	78%	79%	81%	81%	78%	82%
No	<b>16%</b>	11%	17%	26%	15%	18%	14%	12%	19%	14%
Not sure	<b>4%</b>	4%	2%	6%	7%	3%	5%	7%	3%	4%

80% of those who have or had children say they encouraged their children to believe in Santa Claus or Father Christmas. 16% said they did not.

There were no significant differences by age groups or gender.

## 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 panellist 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 2010 election, the Essential Report estimates of first preference votes were all within 1% of the election results.

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. Both Essential Research and Your Source are ISO accredited market research companies. This research was conducted in compliance with AS: ISO20252 guidelines.