

The Essential Report

29 November 2016



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Prepared By: Essential Research

Data Supplied by:



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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 25th to 28th November 2016 and is based on 1,033 respondents.

Aside from the standard question on voting intention, this week's report includes questions on social class, important issues and manufacturing.

The methodology used to carry out this research is described in the appendix on page 17.

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 22/11/16	2 weeks ago 15/11/16	4 weeks ago 1/11/16	Election 2 Jul 16
Liberal	36%	36%	34%	36%	
National	3%	3%	3%	2%	
Total Liberal/National	39%	38%	37%	38%	42.0%
Labor	36%	37%	37%	37%	34.7%
Greens	9%	10%	11%	10%	10.2%
Nick Xenophon Team	3%	3%	3%	2%	
Pauline Hanson's One Nation	7%	6%	6%	6%	
Other/Independent	6%	6%	6%	7%	13.1%
2 party preferred					
Liberal National	49%	48%	47%	48%	50.4%
Labor	51%	52%	53%	52%	49.6%

NB. Sample = 1,842 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.

Social Class

Q Do you believe social classes still exist in Australia?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other	Income under \$1,000pw	Income \$1,000 - \$1,500pw	Income \$1,500 - \$2,000pw	Income \$2,000+	Aug 2014	May 2016
Yes	79%	86%	75%	87%	81%	75%	81%	79%	84%	79%	81%
No	10%	5%	16%	7%	7%	10%	10%	8%	10%	7%	8%
Don't know	12%	9%	9%	6%	12%	15%	9%	13%	6%	14%	11%

79% agreed that social class still exists in Australia - only 10% disagreed. These results are very similar to those of 2014 and earlier this year.

87% of Greens voters think that social class still exists compared to 75% of Liberal/National voters.

82% of those aged 45+ think that social class still exists compared to 75% of those aged under 45.

Those earning \$2,000+ pw (84%) were a little more likely to think social class exists than those earning less than \$1,000 pw (75%).



Social Class Identification

Q Do you consider yourself -

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other	Income under \$1,000pw	Income \$1,000 - \$1,500pw	Income \$1,500 - \$2,000pw	Income \$2,000+	Aug 2014	May 2016
Working class	31%	34%	24%	32%	40%	40%	41%	32%	19%	31%	34%
Middle class	51%	51%	60%	52%	34%	35%	48%	57%	68%	49%	48%
Upper class	3%	1%	5%	5%	2%	2%	2%	2%	5%	2%	2%
None of them	9%	10%	7%	8%	12%	18%	6%	3%	4%	13%	10%
Don't know	6%	4%	4%	4%	2%	5%	4%	6%	3%	6%	5%

51% of respondents described themselves as “middle class” and 31% as “working class” - only 3% claimed to be “upper class”.

Those on higher incomes were more likely to identify as “middle class” while those on lower incomes were more likely to identify as “working class”.

The results are not substantially different from those when this question was asked in 2014 and earlier in 2016.



Labor Party and Social Class

Q Whose interests do you think the Labor Party mainly represent?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other	Working class	Middle class	Apr 2013	Aug 2014	May 2016
Working class	41%	52%	46%	33%	28%	43%	43%	30%	41%	39%
Middle class	16%	23%	11%	29%	12%	11%	21%	16%	14%	17%
Upper class	7%	2%	8%	9%	16%	13%	4%	13%	8%	10%
All of them	6%	10%	4%	11%	3%	4%	7%	8%	8%	8%
None of them	17%	4%	23%	6%	33%	16%	17%	22%	16%	13%
Don't know	13%	9%	8%	12%	9%	13%	8%	11%	13%	13%

41% believe that the Labor Party mainly represents working class people and 16% think they represent the middle class. 52% of Labor voters think the Labor Party mainly represents the working class and 29% of Greens voters think they mainly represent the middle class. 23% of Liberal/National voters don't think they represent any class.

43% of respondents who describe themselves as working class and 43% of those who say they are middle class think the Labor Party mainly represents the working class.

The results are not substantially different from those when this question was asked in 2014 and earlier in 2016.



Liberal Party and Social Class

Q Whose interests do you think the Liberal Party mainly represent?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other	Working class	Middle class	Apr 2013	Aug 2014	May 2016
Working class	3%	4%	4%	3%	2%	4%	2%	5%	4%	4%
Middle class	17%	7%	32%	8%	8%	13%	20%	20%	17%	15%
Upper class	52%	77%	29%	73%	60%	55%	54%	40%	47%	53%
All of them	10%	2%	21%	1%	9%	7%	11%	17%	14%	12%
None of them	8%	4%	7%	4%	16%	10%	6%	8%	8%	4%
Don't know	11%	5%	7%	12%	6%	12%	6%	9%	11%	11%

52% believe that the Liberal Party mainly represents upper class people and 17% think they represent the middle class. 77% of Labor voters and 73% of Greens voters think the Liberal Party mainly represent the upper class. 32% of Liberal/National voters think they represent the middle class and 29% think they represent the upper class.

55% of respondents who describe themselves as working class and 54% of those who say they are middle class think the Liberal Party mainly represents the upper class.

The results are not substantially different from those when this question was asked earlier in 2016.



The Greens and Social Class

Q Whose interests do you think the Greens mainly represent?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other	Working class	Middle class
Working class	8%	11%	9%	10%	4%	11%	8%
Middle class	15%	23%	8%	33%	8%	13%	17%
Upper class	6%	5%	5%	6%	13%	9%	5%
All of them	15%	19%	11%	42%	9%	12%	16%
None of them	33%	21%	45%	2%	49%	28%	37%
Don't know	24%	21%	23%	6%	18%	27%	17%

33% don't think that the Greens represent any particular class of people and 24% don't know. Among Greens voters, 42% think they represent all classes and 33% think they represent the middle class.



One Nation and Social Class

Q Whose interests do you think Pauline Hanson's One Nation mainly represent?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote One Nation	Working class	Middle class
Working class	31%	30%	34%	28%	38%	36%	33%
Middle class	7%	6%	9%	6%	6%	5%	10%
Upper class	3%	4%	3%	11%	-	4%	3%
All of them	11%	9%	6%	2%	49%	12%	10%
None of them	27%	31%	30%	34%	1%	19%	30%
Don't know	21%	21%	17%	18%	6%	24%	14%

31% think that One Nation represents the working class and 27% think they represent none of them.

Among One Nation voters, 49% think they represent all classes and 38% think they represent the working class.



Political parties and Social Class - summary

	Labor	Lib/Nat	Greens	One Nation
Working class	41%	3%	8%	31%
Middle class	16%	17%	15%	7%
Upper class	7%	52%	6%	3%
All of them	6%	10%	15%	11%
None of them	17%	8%	33%	27%
Don't know	13%	11%	24%	21%

	Labor by Labor voters	Lib/Nat by Lib/Nat voters	Greens by Greens voters	One Nation by One Nation voters
Working class	52%	4%	10%	38%
Middle class	23%	32%	33%	6%
Upper class	2%	29%	6%	-
All of them	10%	21%	42%	49%
None of them	4%	7%	2%	1%
Don't know	9%	7%	6%	6%



Important issues

Q Which of the following issues are the 3 most important for the Federal Government to address over the next 12 months?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote Other	Working class	Middle class	Aug 2016	Change
Improving our health system	44%	49%	41%	39%	39%	41%	44%	45%	-1
Housing affordability	31%	36%	22%	36%	33%	35%	27%	31%	-
Reducing unemployment	31%	32%	31%	23%	34%	34%	30%	31%	-
National security and terrorism	30%	20%	41%	11%	39%	32%	29%	37%	-7
Tax avoidance by big companies	26%	28%	21%	28%	29%	29%	24%	31%	-5
Reducing the budget deficit	24%	16%	36%	7%	27%	23%	28%	30%	-6
Protecting our borders	21%	12%	27%	7%	33%	18%	23%		
Protecting workers wages and conditions	20%	30%	14%	16%	15%	22%	18%	18%	+2
More funds for education	17%	17%	16%	22%	13%	16%	18%	20%	-3
Addressing climate change	16%	28%	7%	48%	9%	18%	15%	18%	-2
Protecting the environment	16%	19%	10%	49%	10%	12%	18%	14%	+2
Investing in public transport	12%	12%	14%	8%	9%	9%	12%	14%	-2
Investing in roads	7%	6%	9%	2%	9%	8%	8%	7%	-
Free trade agreements	6%	5%	9%	3%	3%	4%	7%	5%	+1

The most important issues for the Federal Government to address over the next 12 months were improving our health system (44%), housing affordability (31%), reducing unemployment (31%) and national security and terrorism (30%).

For Labor voters the most important issues were improving our health system (49%), housing affordability (36%), reducing unemployment (32%) and protecting workers wages and conditions (30%).

For Liberal/National voters the most important issues were improving our health system (41%), national security and terrorism (41%) and reducing the budget deficit (36%)

For Greens voters the most important issues were protecting the environment (49%), addressing climate change (48%) and improving our health system (39%).

Since this question was asked in August, there have been decreases for national security and terrorism (down 7%), reducing the budget deficit (down 6%) and tax avoidance by big companies (down 5%). Note that an additional issue has been included in this question, which has the effect of reducing the scores across the other items.



Change for classes

Q Do you think life for the following groups of people has improved or got worse over the last few years?

	Improved	Stayed about the same	Got worse	Don't know
Total				
The upper class	57%	26%	5%	12%
The middle class	12%	41%	36%	11%
The working class	8%	24%	58%	11%
Working class				
The upper class	72%	14%	3%	11%
The middle class	18%	41%	30%	11%
The working class	7%	16%	69%	8%
Middle class				
The upper class	51%	34%	6%	8%
The middle class	8%	44%	42%	6%
The working class	7%	29%	56%	8%



57% think that life for the upper class has improved over the last few years and 58% think life for the working class has got worse. They were split over changes in life for the middle class – 41% think it has stayed about the same and 36% think it has got worse.

Those who identify as working class were more likely to think life had improved for the upper class (72%) and got worse for the working class (69%). Those who identify as middle class were only a little more likely to think life for the middle class had got worse (42%).



Protecting manufacturing

Q Do you believe protecting local industries and Australian manufacturing jobs will lead to higher costs for Australian consumers and businesses?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other
Will lead to much higher costs	17%	15%	23%	12%	12%
Will lead to slightly higher costs	47%	48%	49%	58%	46%
Will not lead to higher costs	13%	15%	10%	10%	22%
Don't know	22%	22%	17%	20%	21%

64% think that protecting local industries and Australian manufacturing jobs will lead to higher costs for Australian consumers and businesses. Only 13% think it will not lead to higher costs. However, only 17% think it will lead to much higher costs while 47% think it will lead to slightly higher costs.

Liberal voters were more likely to think it will lead to much higher costs (23%) and Greens voters more likely to think it will lead to slightly higher costs (58%).

There were no substantial differences across demographics.

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.