

The Essential Report

13 December 2016



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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 December 2016 and is based on 1,000 respondents.

Aside from the standard question on voting intention, this week's report includes questions on party leaders, whether parties are becoming more progressive or conservative, voting for a new conservative party, voting issues and increasing wages of Australian workers.

The methodology used to carry out this research is described in the appendix on page 16.

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 6/12/16	2 weeks ago 29/11/16	4 weeks ago 15/11/16	Election 2 Jul 16
Liberal	34%	35%	36%	34%	
National	3%	3%	3%	3%	
Total Liberal/National	37%	38%	39%	37%	42.0%
Labor	37%	36%	36%	37%	34.7%
Greens	9%	9%	9%	11%	10.2%
Nick Xenophon Team	3%	3%	3%	3%	
Pauline Hanson's One Nation	7%	8%	7%	6%	
Other/Independent	6%	6%	6%	6%	13.1%
2 party preferred					
Liberal National	47%	48%	49%	47%	50.4%
Labor	53%	52%	51%	53%	49.6%

NB. Sample = 1,796 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	Oct 2016	Nov 2016
Total approve	34%	19%	65%	24%	17%	56%	45%	38%	35%	38%	36%
Total disapprove	46%	66%	20%	62%	63%	23%	35%	40%	43%	41%	44%
Strongly approve	5%	2%	11%	2%	3%	13%	6%	6%	4%	5%	6%
Approve	29%	17%	54%	22%	14%	43%	39%	32%	31%	33%	30%
Disapprove	30%	39%	17%	43%	41%	16%	24%	24%	27%	25%	26%
Strongly disapprove	16%	27%	3%	19%	22%	7%	11%	16%	16%	16%	18%
Don't know	20%	14%	15%	14%	20%	21%	21%	21%	22%	20%	21%

34% (down 2% from 5 weeks ago) of respondents approve of the job Malcolm Turnbull is doing as Prime Minister and 46% (up 2%) disapprove – a change in net approval rating from -8 to -12. This is Malcolm Turnbull's lowest approval and net rating since becoming Prime Minister.

65% (down 3%) of Liberal/National voters approve of Malcolm Turnbull's performance with 20% (up 4%) disapproving. 19% (down 4%) of Labor voters and 24% (up 6%) of Greens voters approve of Malcolm Turnbull's performance.

By gender, men were 39% approve/49% disapprove and women 30% approve/42% 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	Oct 2016	Nov 2016
Total approve	35%	62%	21%	46%	22%	31%	35%	27%	27%	34%	36%	37%	34%
Total disapprove	38%	16%	61%	32%	57%	27%	39%	47%	47%	40%	41%	40%	43%
Strongly approve	6%	15%	2%	7%	-	5%	7%	4%	3%	7%	6%	5%	6%
Approve	29%	47%	19%	39%	22%	26%	28%	23%	24%	27%	30%	32%	28%
Disapprove	21%	13%	30%	23%	26%	17%	23%	26%	29%	22%	24%	23%	26%
Strongly disapprove	17%	3%	31%	9%	31%	10%	16%	21%	18%	18%	17%	17%	17%
Don't know	25%	22%	18%	22%	20%	43%	26%	25%	26%	25%	22%	22%	23%

35% (up 1% in last 5 weeks) of respondents approve of the job Bill Shorten is doing as opposition leader and 38% (down 5%) disapprove – a change in his net rating from -9 to -3.

62% (up 1%) of Labor voters approve of the job Bill Shorten is doing and 16% (down 5%) disapprove.

41% of men and 30% of women approve of Bill Shorten. 43% of men and 34% 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
Malcolm Turnbull	39%	15%	76%	25%	34%	53%	54%	48%	40%	41%	41%	40%
Bill Shorten	28%	56%	7%	44%	19%	17%	15%	19%	29%	26%	28%	28%
Don't know	33%	29%	17%	31%	47%	30%	31%	33%	32%	33%	31%	32%

39% (down 1% in last 5 weeks) of respondents think Malcolm Turnbull would make the better Prime Minister and 28% (no change) think Bill Shorten would make the better Prime Minister.

43% of men prefer Malcolm Turnbull and 31% prefer Bill Shorten.

35% of women prefer Malcolm Turnbull and 25% prefer Bill Shorten.



The Liberal Party

Q Do you think the Liberal Party is becoming more progressive or more conservative?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other	Dec 2015
More progressive	14%	8%	26%	9%	13%	27%
More conservative	37%	48%	29%	63%	32%	24%
Neither	30%	28%	34%	19%	40%	27%
Don't know	18%	16%	11%	10%	14%	22%

37% think the Liberal Party is becoming more conservative and 14% think it is becoming more progressive. 30% think it is neither.

Among Liberal/National voters, 29% think it is becoming more conservative and 26% more progressive.

43% of those aged 55+ think the Liberal Party is becoming more conservative compared to 30% of those aged 18-34.

Compared to 12 months ago, there has been an increase in those thinking the Liberal Party is becoming more conservative (up 13%)



The Labor Party

Q Do you think the Labor Party is becoming more progressive or more conservative?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other	Dec 2015
More progressive	21%	38%	11%	19%	19%	14%
More conservative	21%	16%	27%	42%	19%	24%
Neither	37%	31%	46%	25%	46%	39%
Don't know	21%	15%	16%	14%	16%	24%

21% think the Labor Party is becoming more conservative and 21% think it is becoming more progressive. 37% think it is neither.

Among Labor voters, 16% think it is becoming more conservative and 38% more progressive.

52% of those aged 55+ think the Labor Party is becoming neither more conservative nor more conservative.

Compared to 12 months ago, there has been an increase in those thinking the Labor Party is becoming more progressive (up 7%)



The Greens

Q Do you think the Greens are becoming more progressive or more conservative?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other
More progressive	21%	24%	16%	48%	21%
More conservative	15%	17%	17%	15%	17%
Neither	36%	37%	44%	25%	37%
Don't know	28%	23%	24%	13%	24%

21% think the Greens are becoming more progressive and 15% think they are becoming more conservative. 36% think they are neither.

Among Greens voters, 15% think they are becoming more conservative and 48% more progressive.

There were no major differences across age groups.



Voting for a new conservative party

Q If a new conservative party was formed and included people like Tony Abbott, how likely would you be to vote for them?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other	Dec 2015
Total likely	23%	13%	41%	11%	25%	20%
Total unlikely	58%	74%	41%	80%	63%	65%
Very likely	7%	4%	11%	2%	13%	9%
Somewhat likely	16%	9%	30%	9%	11%	11%
Not very likely	16%	16%	20%	12%	17%	16%
Not at all likely	42%	58%	21%	68%	46%	49%
Don't know	19%	14%	19%	9%	13%	15%

23% say they would be very or somewhat likely to vote for a new conservative party and 58% would be not very or not at all likely.

41% of Liberal/National voters and 32% of those aged 65+ say they would be likely to vote for a new conservative party.

Compared to 12 months ago, likelihood of voting for a new conservative party has increased a little.



Statements about voting

Q Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about voting?

	Total agree	Total disagree	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Each election I decide on which party is offering me the most	66%	23%	16%	50%	15%	8%	10%
I always vote for the same party at every election	46%	47%	13%	33%	37%	10%	7%
I'm more likely to vote for an independent or minor party than I used to be	43%	44%	10%	33%	28%	16%	13%
I am less likely to vote for the same party every election than I was in the past	41%	43%	7%	34%	31%	12%	16%
I don't look at the party, I look at the individual candidate	39%	52%	7%	32%	39%	13%	9%
I usually vote for an independent or minor party	20%	67%	4%	16%	44%	23%	13%



	Total agree	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other
Each election I decide on which party is offering me the most	66%	70%	63%	73%	79%
I always vote for the same party at every election	46%	57%	57%	40%	19%
I'm more likely to vote for an independent or minor party than I used to be	43%	40%	36%	62%	71%
I am less likely to vote for the same party every election than I was in the past	41%	38%	40%	50%	61%
I don't look at the party, I look at the individual candidate	39%	34%	40%	48%	47%
I usually vote for an independent or minor party	20%	15%	13%	52%	36%

A majority (66%) agree they vote according to “which party is offering me the most”. 71% of women agree compared to 62% of men.

46% agree they always vote for the same party – including 57% of Labor and Liberal/National voters.

43% agree they are more likely to vote for an independent or minor party than they used to be. Although 71% of independent/other party voters agree, only 36% say they usually vote for an independent or minor party.

41% agree they are less likely to vote for the same party – including 61% of other/independent voters.



Increasing wages

Q Would you approve or disapprove of the following actions to increase the wages of Australian workers?

	Total approve	Total dis-approve	Strongly approve	Approve	Dis-approve	Strongly dis-approve	Don't know
Increasing the minimum wage	80%	11%	28%	52%	9%	2%	9%
Cutting personal income taxes	71%	17%	25%	46%	14%	3%	12%
Reducing the number of foreign workers on 457 visas	70%	13%	36%	34%	11%	2%	17%
Stronger regulation of labor hire companies	69%	8%	24%	45%	6%	2%	22%
Cutting company taxes so that business invest and give workers pay rises	61%	24%	16%	45%	15%	9%	15%
Giving more power to unions to negotiate pay rises	43%	41%	13%	30%	22%	19%	16%

	Total approve	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other	Work full time	Work part time
Increasing the minimum wage	80%	88%	76%	82%	86%	76%	83%
Cutting personal income taxes	71%	74%	74%	61%	72%	78%	62%
Reducing the number of foreign workers on 457 visas	70%	75%	74%	53%	80%	70%	62%
Stronger regulation of labor hire companies	69%	74%	72%	67%	79%	72%	65%
Cutting company taxes so that business invest and give workers pay rises	61%	55%	72%	51%	65%	64%	61%
Giving more power to unions to negotiate pay rises	43%	63%	24%	53%	39%	45%	40%

There was substantial majority agreement with all suggested actions to increase wages – except giving more power to unions to negotiate pay rises (43% approve, 41% disapprove). This was mainly due to strong disapproval from Liberal/National voters (24% approve/64% disapprove).

80% approved of increasing the minimum wage, including at least three-quarters of all voter groups.

There were similar levels of approval of cutting personal income taxes (71%), reducing the number of workers on 457 visas (70%) and stronger regulation of labor hire companies (69%).

Cutting personal income taxes was more favoured by fulltime workers (78%) than part time workers (62%).

83% of part time workers approved increasing the minimum wage.

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.