

The Essential Report

20 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 15th to 18th December 2016 and is based on 1,001 respondents.

Aside from the standard question on voting intention, this week's report includes questions on the past 12 months and expectations for next year, Malcolm Turnbull, the economy and Christmas.

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 13/12/16	2 weeks ago 6/12/16	4 weeks ago 22/11/16	Election 2 Jul 16
Liberal	34%	34%	35%	36%	
National	2%	3%	3%	3%	
Total Liberal/National	37%	37%	38%	38%	42.0%
Labor	37%	37%	36%	37%	34.7%
Greens	10%	9%	9%	10%	10.2%
Nick Xenophon Team	3%	3%	3%	3%	
Pauline Hanson's One Nation	8%	7%	8%	6%	
Other/Independent	6%	6%	6%	6%	13.1%
2 party preferred					
Liberal National	47%	47%	48%	48%	50.4%
Labor	53%	53%	52%	52%	49.6%

NB. Sample = 1,779. 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.

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 bad	NET	Very good	Good	Neither good nor bad	Bad	Very bad	Don't know	2013 NET	2014 NET	2015 NET
The Australian economy	17%	36%	-19	2%	15%	40%	30%	6%	6%	-13	-13	-11
Australian politics in general	9%	62%	-53	1%	8%	24%	40%	22%	5%	-62	-53	-41
Large companies and corporations	26%	21%	+5	3%	23%	43%	17%	4%	10%	-9	+14	+5
Small business	15%	37%	-22	2%	13%	38%	30%	7%	10%	-45	-28	-12
Trade unions	13%	31%	-18	2%	11%	39%	21%	10%	17%	-25	-18	-27
The average Australian	18%	36%	-18	2%	16%	41%	27%	9%	5%	-22	-23	-14
Your personal financial situation	26%	34%	-8	2%	24%	38%	23%	11%	3%	-8	-11	-6
Your workplace (workers)	37%	25%	+12	6%	31%	34%	17%	8%	4%	+8	-5	+14
You and your family overall	36%	24%	+12	6%	30%	36%	17%	7%	4%	+18	+3	+21
The planet	12%	44%	-32	2%	10%	37%	29%	15%	7%	-	-	



Respondents believed that 2016 has been a bad year for all groups except large companies (+5), your workplace (+12) and you and your family overall (+12). It was considered a particularly bad year for Australian politics in general (-53) and the planet (-32).

Relative to 2015 (as measured in December last year), this year was considered worse for politics in general (down 12), small businesses (down 10), you and your family overall (down 9) and the Australian economy (down 8) but better for trade unions (up 9).



Expectations for 2017

Q Thinking about the next 12 months, do you think 2017 will be a good or bad year for each of the following?

	Total good	Total bad	NET	Very good	Good	Neither good nor bad	Bad	Very bad	Don't know	2013 NET	2014 NET	2015 NET
The Australian economy	20%	37%	-17	2%	18%	33%	29%	8%	10%	-10	-10	+2
Australian politics in general	13%	50%	-37	1%	12%	27%	35%	15%	10%	-24	-29	-5
Large companies and corporations	28%	20%	+8	4%	24%	38%	15%	5%	14%	-	+13	+14
Small business	21%	31%	-10	2%	19%	35%	25%	6%	13%	-24	-17	+3
Trade unions	14%	28%	-14	2%	12%	38%	20%	8%	19%	-26	-16	-16
The average Australian	19%	31%	-12	2%	17%	40%	24%	7%	9%	-9	-17	-2
Your personal financial situation	31%	25%	+6	4%	27%	36%	18%	7%	8%	+6	-	+12
Your workplace (workers)	39%	19%	+20	6%	33%	33%	13%	6%	9%	+15	-	+21
You and your family overall	39%	18%	+21	6%	33%	35%	13%	5%	8%	+25	+10	+28
The planet	14%	41%	-27%	2%	12%	35%	27%	14%	10%	-	-	-

Overall, there was a positive outlook for large companies and corporations (net +8), your personal financial situation (+6), your workplace (+20), and you and your family overall (+21). Expectations were especially negative for Australian politics in general (-37) and the planet (-27).

Compared to last year, respondents were more pessimistic about all items measured except for trade unions (up 2) and particularly more pessimistic for Australian politics in general (down 32), small business (down 13) and the average Australian (down 10).



Whether Malcolm Turnbull understands issues

Q For each of the following groups of people – do you think the Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull understands their issues and is likely to act in their interests?

	Understands their issues and is likely to act in their interests	Understands their issues but is unlikely to act in their interests	Does not understand their issues	Don't know
Students	11%	31%	38%	20%
Working mothers	14%	27%	40%	18%
Unemployed	14%	25%	45%	16%
Casual and part time workers	14%	29%	40%	17%
Full time workers	20%	37%	25%	17%
People on low incomes	11%	26%	48%	15%
People on high incomes	56%	17%	10%	17%
Pensioners	13%	28%	45%	15%
Self-funded retirees	18%	33%	30%	19%
Small business owners	20%	36%	25%	18%
People who work for small businesses	13%	37%	32%	18%
People who run large corporations	57%	17%	8%	18%
People who work for large corporations	34%	30%	15%	20%



57% think Malcolm Turnbull understands the issues of people who run large corporations and will act in their interests and 56% think he will act in the interests of people on high incomes.

37% think Malcolm Turnbull understands the issues for full time workers and people who work for small businesses but is unlikely to act in their interests. 36% think he understands the issues for small business owners but is unlikely to act in their interests.

People whose issues he does not understand included people on low incomes (48%), pensioners (45%) and the unemployed (45%).



State of the economy

Q Overall, how would you describe the current state of the Australian economy?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other	May 2012	Apr 2013	Apr 2014	Mar 2015	Jan 2016	Jul 2016	Sep 2016
Total good	23%	19%	39%	19%	13%	35%	45%	38%	27%	28%	30%	30%
Total poor	36%	40%	24%	35%	59%	29%	26%	24%	33%	31%	26%	27%
Very good	2%	3%	3%	-	2%	6%	8%	3%	3%	4%	4%	3%
Good	21%	16%	36%	19%	11%	29%	37%	35%	24%	24%	26%	27%
Neither good nor poor	37%	38%	37%	44%	25%	33%	28%	34%	36%	36%	41%	40%
Poor	28%	30%	22%	32%	41%	20%	17%	19%	24%	24%	20%	20%
Very poor	8%	10%	2%	3%	18%	9%	9%	5%	9%	7%	6%	7%
Don't know	4%	3%	1%	2%	3%	2%	2%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%

23% (down 7% since September) described the economy as good or very good and 36% (up 9%) poor/very poor - 37% said it was neither.

This is the most negative result for this question over the past 4 years.

Liberal National voters were somewhat more optimistic than other voters. Among Labor voters 19% (down 11%) thought it was good and 40% (up 13%) poor; for Liberal/National voters 39% (up 3%) said it was good and 24% (up 3%) poor.



Economy heading in right or wrong direction

Q From what you have read and heard, do you think the Australian economy is heading in the right direction or the wrong direction?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other	May 2010	May 2011	Jun 2012	Apr 2013	Apr 2014	May 2015	Jul 2016	Sep 2016
The right direction	26%	18%	50%	11%	11%	51%	45%	43%	36%	39%	35%	33%	33%
The wrong direction	45%	54%	24%	62%	64%	25%	29%	32%	39%	34%	40%	35%	36%
Don't know	29%	27%	25%	27%	25%	24%	25%	25%	25%	26%	25%	31%	31%

26% (down 7% since September) of respondents think that Australia's economy is heading in the right direction and 45% (up 9%) think it is heading in the wrong direction. This is the most negative result for this question over the past 6 years.

18% (down 8%) of Labor voters, 50% (down 2%) of Liberal/National voters and 11% (down 15%) of Greens voters think the economy is heading in the right direction. 54% (up 9%) of Labor voters, 24% (up 2%) of Liberal/National voters and 62% (up 22%) of Greens voters think it is heading in the wrong direction.

Job security

Q In the next two years, do you expect your job to be more secure, less secure or about the same?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other	Work full time	Work part time	Oct 2014	Feb 2015	Sep 2015	Apr 2016	Sep 2016
More Secure	13%	12%	15%	5%	15%	16%	6%	14%	9%	7%	14%	14%
Less secure	30%	35%	22%	40%	40%	27%	35%	31%	29%	28%	31%	27%
Much more secure	4%	5%	4%	1%	5%	5%	1%	5%	3%	2%	5%	5%
Somewhat more secure	9%	7%	11%	4%	10%	11%	5%	9%	6%	5%	9%	9%
About the same	51%	50%	61%	52%	38%	53%	54%	50%	58%	50%	49%	53%
Somewhat less secure	16%	17%	11%	36%	17%	15%	21%	17%	17%	16%	19%	16%
Much less secure	14%	18%	11%	4%	23%	12%	14%	14%	12%	12%	12%	11%
Don't know	6%	4%	2%	3%	7%	5%	4%	4%	4%	15%	7%	6%

13% of respondents (down 1% since September) feel that their job will become more secure over the next two years. 30% (up 3%) feel it will become less secure while the largest proportion (51%) feel it will stay about the same.

Liberal/National voters were more likely to say their job security would be about the same (61%) and less likely to say it would be less secure (22%).

35% of part time workers say they expect their job to be less secure compared to 27% of full time workers.



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	Aged 55+	2015
I enjoy Christmas a lot	34%	32%	43%	23%	34%	30%	37%	42%	31%	29%	36%
I enjoy some things about Christmas	46%	45%	45%	62%	46%	46%	47%	42%	46%	51%	44%
I don't enjoy Christmas at all	7%	8%	5%	8%	7%	8%	7%	5%	9%	6%	6%
I don't really care one way or the other about Christmas	11%	14%	8%	6%	11%	14%	8%	7%	12%	12%	12%
Don't know	2%	1%	-	1%	1%	2%	2%	4%	2%	2%	1%

34% say they enjoy Christmas a lot and 46% enjoy some things about Christmas. These results are similar to those when this question was asked 12 months ago.

Women were a little more likely to say they enjoy it a lot (37%) as were younger respondents (42% of aged 18-34).

24% of those on incomes under \$1,000 pw say they enjoy it a lot compared to 39% of those earning over \$2,000 pw.

40% of those with children say they enjoy it a lot compared to 29% 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	Aged 55+	2015
Yes	78%	77%	82%	60%	84%	76%	79%	69%	78%	83%	80%
No	19%	19%	14%	36%	15%	20%	17%	24%	20%	14%	16%
Not sure	4%	4%	3%	5%	1%	4%	4%	7%	2%	3%	4%

78% of those who have or had children say they encouraged their children to believe in Santa Claus or Father Christmas. 19% said they did not. These results are similar to those when this question was asked 12 months ago.

69% of those aged under 35 say they encouraged their children to believe in Santa Claus or Father Christmas compared to 83% of those aged 55+.



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.

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