

The Essential Report

21 March 2017



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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 17th to 20th March 2017 and is based on 1,018 respondents.

Aside from the standard question on voting intention, this week's report includes questions on political parties and gas/electricity prices.

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 14/3/17	2 weeks ago 7/3/17	4 weeks ago 21/2/17	Election 2 Jul 16
Liberal	31%	32%	34%	33%	
National	3%	3%	3%	3%	
Total Liberal/National	34%	35%	37%	36%	42.0%
Labor	37%	36%	37%	34%	34.7%
Greens	9%	9%	9%	10%	10.2%
Nick Xenophon Team	3%	3%	3%	4%	
Pauline Hanson's One Nation	10%	11%	9%	10%	
Other/Independent	6%	6%	5%	6%	13.1%
2 party preferred					
Liberal National	45%	47%	47%	48%	50.4%
Labor	55%	53%	53%	52%	49.6%

NB. Sample = 1,803. 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.

Attributes of the Labor Party

Q Here is a list of things both favourable and unfavourable that have been said about various political parties. Which statements do you feel fit the Labor Party?

	Total	Change	Jul 2009	April 2011	Aug 2013	Nov 2015	Mar 2016	Jun 2016
Will promise to do anything to win votes	63%	-1	57%	72%	65%	64%	62%	64%
Looks after the interests of working people	61%	+5		39%	53%	55%	50%	56%
Moderate	58%	+4	65%	51%	48%	56%	47%	54%
Understands the problems facing Australia	52%	+3	62%	40%	50%	48%	43%	49%
Have a vision for the future	52%	+4		43%	49%	42%	40%	48%
Out of touch with ordinary people	50%	+4	44%	61%	51%	52%	53%	46%
Have good policies	50%	+4			46%	42%	38%	46%
Divided	49%	-	30%	66%	66%	58%	54%	49%
Clear about what they stand for	47%	+4		28%	38%	37%	35%	43%
Has a good team of leaders	41%	+2	60%	34%	36%	33%	30%	39%
Too close to the big corporate and financial interests	40%	+5		46%	31%	37%	35%	35%
Trustworthy	35%	+2			30%	34%	29%	33%
Keeps its promises	34%	+3	44%	20%	27%	29%	28%	31%
Extreme	28%	-2	25%	38%	34%	30%	35%	30%

The Labor Party's main attributes were - will promise anything to win votes (63%), looks after the interests of working people (61%) and moderate (58%).

Since this question was asked in June last year, overall there has been a small improvement in most positive attributes. The main changes have been for looks after the interest of working people (up 5%) and too close to the big corporate and financial interests (up 5+).



Attributes of the Liberal Party

Q And which statements do you feel fit the Liberal Party?

	Total	Change	Jul 2009	April 2011	Aug 2013	Nov 2015	Mar 2016	Jun 2016
Too close to the big corporate and financial interests	71%	+5		60%	60%	67%	62%	66%
Will promise to do anything to win votes	71%	+6	67%	65%	65%	68%	63%	65%
Out of touch with ordinary people	68%	+5	62%	54%	58%	62%	58%	63%
Divided	68%	+16	74%	49%	31%	56%	61%	52%
Moderate	49%	+2	50%	55%	48%	51%	47%	47%
Have a vision for the future	45%	-6		48%	51%	54%	46%	51%
Clear about what they stand for	41%	-5		44%	45%	46%	39%	46%
Understands the problems facing Australia	41%	-3	44%	51%	48%	46%	41%	44%
Have good policies	36%	-5			38%	43%	39%	41%
Extreme	36%	-2	36%	36%	39%	39%	36%	38%
Has a good team of leaders	33%	-9	29%	40%	36%	48%	41%	42%
Looks after the interests of working people	30%	-1		38%	36%	32%	31%	31%
Trustworthy	28%	-2			30%	29%	28%	30%
Keeps its promises	25%	-5	28%	33%	32%	25%	27%	30%

The Liberal Party's main attributes were - too close to the big corporate and financial interest (71%), will promise anything to win votes (71%), out of touch with ordinary people (68%) and divided (68%).

Main changes since June last year were – divided (up 16%) and has a good team of leaders (down 9%).



Attributes – Liberal vs labor

	Liberal	Labor	Difference
Too close to the big corporate and financial interests	71%	40%	+31
Divided	68%	49%	+19
Out of touch with ordinary people	68%	50%	+18
Will promise to do anything to win votes	71%	63%	+8
Extreme	36%	28%	+8
Clear about what they stand for	41%	47%	-6
Have a vision for the future	45%	52%	-7
Trustworthy	28%	35%	-7
Has a good team of leaders	33%	41%	-8
Moderate	49%	58%	-9
Keeps its promises	25%	34%	-9
Understands the problems facing Australia	41%	52%	-11
Have good policies	36%	50%	-14
Looks after the interests of working people	30%	61%	-31



Change in Gas/Electricity Costs

Q Over the last few years, have your gas and/or electricity costs increased, decreased or stayed much the same?

	Total	Aged 18-34	Aged 35-54	Aged 55+	Dec 2012
Total increased	77%	71%	78%	83%	86%
Total decreased	2%	2%	3%	3%	2%
Increased a lot	32%	25%	35%	37%	45%
Increased a moderate amount	24%	23%	23%	27%	26%
Increased a little	21%	23%	20%	19%	15%
Stayed about the same	13%	14%	14%	12%	8%
Decreased a little	1%	1%	2%	2%	1%
Decreased a moderate amount	1%	<1%	<1%	1%	*
Decreased a lot	<1%	<1%	<1%	1%	1%
Don't know	7%	13%	5%	1%	5%

77% say their power costs have increased over the last few years including 32% who say their costs have increased a lot (down from 45% in 2012).



Gas reservation policy

- Q It has been said that one of the reasons for increasing gas prices is that Australian gas exports have increased so much it is causing domestic shortages. Would you approve or disapprove of the Government legislating a reservation policy where a percentage of gas is reserved for domestic use?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other
Total approve	75%	76%	82%	79%	77%
Total disapprove	6%	6%	5%	5%	7%
Strongly approve	39%	39%	42%	35%	47%
Approve	36%	37%	40%	44%	30%
Disapprove	4%	4%	4%	3%	4%
Strongly disapprove	2%	2%	1%	2%	3%
Don't know	19%	17%	13%	16%	16%

75% approve of the Government legislating a reservation policy where a percentage of gas is reserved for domestic use and 6% disapprove. More than three-quarters of all voter groups approve.

Reducing power bills

Q Which of the following would be the best way to reduce power bills?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other
More Government control of the power companies	29%	31%	32%	40%	27%
More private power companies to increase competition	17%	12%	23%	14%	17%
More Government ownership of energy production	29%	34%	26%	22%	34%
Don't know	25%	23%	18%	23%	22%

29% think the best way to reduce power bills is more Government ownership of energy production, 29% favour more Government control of the power companies and only 17% want more private power companies to increase competition.



SA energy plan

Q The South Australian Government has announced it intends to build, own and operate a new gas-fired electricity plant and build Australia’s largest battery storage plant to address energy supply issues in South Australia. Do you approve or disapprove of the approach South Australia is taking on energy issues?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other
Total approve	68%	76%	71%	73%	62%
Total disapprove	11%	5%	14%	12%	15%
Strongly approve	28%	37%	21%	31%	29%
Approve	40%	39%	50%	42%	33%
Disapprove	8%	4%	10%	8%	8%
Strongly disapprove	3%	1%	4%	4%	7%
Don't know	21%	19%	15%	15%	23%

68% approve of the approach South Australia is taking on energy issues and 11% disapprove. In South Australia, 59% approve and 17% disapprove.



Coal seam gas mining

Q There is currently debate over the exploration and extraction of coal seam gas in Australia. Which of the following statements is closest to your view?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other
Coal seam gas mining should be banned completely	25%	28%	19%	53%	23%
Coal seam gas mining on farming land should be restricted	31%	32%	39%	24%	28%
There is sufficient current regulation of coal seam gas mining	14%	14%	19%	5%	17%
Don't know	29%	26%	22%	18%	32%

31% think that coal seam gas mining on farming land should be restricted and 25% think coal seam gas mining should be banned completely. Only 14% think there is sufficient current regulation of coal seam gas mining.

Liberal/National voters are more likely to think coal seam gas mining on farming land should be restricted (39%) while more than half (53%) of Greens voters think it should be banned completely.

What people have for dinner

Q Thinking about what you had for dinner over the past week, please indicate the number of nights that each of the following applies to your dinners.

	None	1-2 nights	3-5 nights	6-7 nights
Home cooked or prepared by me	15%	26%	34%	25%
Home cooked or prepared by someone else	40%	24%	23%	13%
Bought pre-prepared meal that didn't need any home preparation.	67%	28%	4%	1%
Leftovers from a previous meal	39%	51%	8%	1%
Takeaway	55%	40%	4%	1%
Ate at a restaurant or cafe	63%	33%	3%	1%
Did not eat dinner	82%	14%	3%	2%

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.