

The Essential Report

9 May 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 4th to 8th May 2017 and is based on 1,011 respondents.

Aside from the standard question on voting intention, this week's report includes questions on party leaders, education funding and the federal budget surplus.

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 2/5/17	2 weeks ago 25/4/17	4 weeks ago 11/4/17	Election 2 Jul 16
Liberal	35%	35%	34%	35%	
National	2%	2%	3%	3%	
Total Liberal/National	37%	38%	37%	37%	42.0%
Labor	38%	37%	36%	36%	34.7%
Greens	10%	9%	10%	10%	10.2%
Nick Xenophon Team	3%	3%	3%	3%	
Pauline Hanson's One Nation	6%	7%	8%	8%	
Other/Independent	6%	6%	6%	6%	13.1%
2 party preferred					
Liberal National	46%	47%	47%	47%	50.4%
Labor	54%	53%	53%	53%	49.6%

NB. Sample = 1,795. 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.

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	Apr 2017	Mar 2017	Feb 2017	Jan 2017	Dec 2016	June 2016	Dec 2015
Total Approve	37%	18%	75%	17%	20%	35%	33%	34%	37%	34%	38%	56%
Total Disapprove	48%	70%	17%	72%	69%	47%	50%	49%	48%	46%	40%	23%
Strongly approve	5%	2%	11%	-	2%	5%	5%	5%	6%	5%	6%	13%
Approve	32%	16%	64%	17%	18%	30%	28%	29%	31%	29%	32%	43%
Disapprove	29%	42%	15%	37%	40%	29%	30%	28%	30%	30%	24%	16%
Strongly disapprove	19%	28%	2%	35%	29%	18%	20%	21%	18%	16%	16%	7%
Don't know	15%	12%	8%	12%	10%	17%	18%	16%	16%	20%	21%	21%

37% approved of the job Malcolm Turnbull is doing as Prime Minister (up 2% from last month), and 48% disapproved (up 1% from last month).

75% of Liberal/National voters approved of the job Malcolm Turnbull is doing, compared to 18% of ALP voters and 17% of Greens voters.

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	Apr 2017	Mar 2017	Feb 2017	Jan 2017	Dec 2016	Dec 2015	Dec 2014
Total Approve	34%	62%	20%	33%	21%	33%	30%	30%	37%	35%	27%	35%
Total Disapprove	45%	18%	68%	46%	64%	46%	49%	47%	44%	38%	47%	39%
Strongly approve	6%	14%	2%	6%	1%	5%	4%	5%	7%	6%	4%	7%
Approve	28%	48%	18%	27%	20%	28%	26%	25%	30%	29%	23%	28%
Disapprove	26%	15%	33%	37%	33%	26%	26%	27%	25%	21%	26%	23%
Strongly disapprove	19%	3%	35%	9%	31%	20%	23%	20%	19%	17%	21%	16%
Don't know	22%	20%	12%	21%	15%	22%	22%	22%	20%	25%	25%	26%

34% approved of the job Bill Shorten is doing as Prime Minister (up 1% from last month), and 45% disapproved (down 1%).

62% of ALP voters approved of the job Bill Shorten is doing, compared to 33% of Greens voters and 20% of Liberal/National voters.



Preferred 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	Apr 2017	Mar 2017	Feb 2017	Jan 2017	Dec 2016	Jun 2016	Dec 2015	Dec 2014
Malcolm Turnbull	39%	11%	85%	12%	34%	39%	38%	39%	39%	39%	40%	54%	54%
Bill Shorten	31%	61%	4%	59%	17%	28%	26%	25%	28%	28%	29%	15%	15%
Don't know	30%	27%	11%	30%	49%	32%	36%	36%	33%	33%	32%	31%	31%

39% thought that Malcolm Turnbull would make a better Prime Minister (unchanged from last month), and 31% thought Bill Shorten would be better (up 3%).

The results were split by party, with 85% of Liberal/National voters saying that Malcolm Turnbull would be a better Prime Minister, and 59% of ALP voters saying the Bill Shorten would.

Greens voters preferred Bill Shorten (59% preferred) to Turnbull (12%).



University Funding

Q Do you approve or disapprove of the following changes to university funding proposed by the Federal Government?

	Total approve	Total disapprove	Strongly Approve	Approve	Disapprove	Strongly disapprove	Don't know
Reducing funding to universities by \$2.8 billion	28%	56%	7%	21%	33%	23%	15%
Increasing student fees by \$2,000 - \$3,600 for a 4-year degree	30%	60%	7%	23%	32%	28%	11%
Requiring students to begin repaying loans once their salary reaches \$42,000 instead of \$55,000	47%	44%	14%	33%	24%	20%	10%

56% disapproved of the proposal to reduce university funding by \$2.8 billion, and only 28% approved. Those most likely to disapprove were Greens voters (80% disapprove), ALP voters (69%) and those with a university degree (65%). Those most likely to approve were Liberal/National voters (45% approve) those aged 65+ (40%) and males (34%).

60% disapproved of the proposal to increase student fees, and only 30% approved. Those most likely to disapprove were Greens voters (84% disapprove), ALP voters (73%) and those aged 18-24 (71%). Those most likely to approve were Liberal/National voters (51% approve) and those aged 65+ (46%).

47% approved of the proposal to require students to repay their loan earlier, and 44% disapproved. Those most likely to approve were those aged 65+ (68% approve), Liberal/National voters (67%) and other party/independent voters (57%). Those most likely to disapprove were Greens voters (68% disapprove) and those aged 18-24 (59%).



Education Cuts

Q The Government is proposing to increase student fees for university education by 7.5% over 4 years and cut University funding by 2.8 per cent. To what extent do you agree with these statements about the proposed changes?

	Total agree	Total disagree	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
The changes are needed to reduce the Federal Budget Deficit	34%	41%	11%	23%	17%	21%	20%	7%
These changes will make it harder for young people to enter the housing market	53%	22%	24%	29%	18%	15%	7%	6%
Universities have plenty of funding. They can absorb a cut without it damaging the quality of education.	37%	30%	10%	27%	23%	18%	12%	9%
With university fees up, penalty rates reduced, and housing affordability becoming harder, young people have cause to feel they are under attack.	61%	17%	29%	32%	17%	10%	7%	5%
University education should be free for all Australians, just like it is for primary and secondary school	45%	29%	24%	21%	20%	19%	10%	5%
These changes will make it harder for Australia to become more innovative.	49%	21%	23%	26%	21%	14%	7%	7%
A government that cuts university funding while delivering business a tax cut has the wrong priorities	57%	16%	32%	25%	21%	10%	6%	6%

The most widely agreed with statement was “With university fees up, penalty rates reduced, and housing affordability becoming harder, young people have cause to feel they are under attack”. Those most likely to agree with this statement were Greens voters (82%) and ALP voters (76%). Those most likely to disagree were those aged 65+ (28% disagree) and Liberal/National voters (27%).

The most widely disagreed with statement was “The changes are needed to reduce the Federal Budget Deficit”. Those most likely to disagree with this statement were also Greens voters (73% disagree) and ALP voters (54%). Those most likely to agree were also Liberal/National voters (54% agree) and those aged 65+ (49%).



Student Contributions to University Fees

Q Currently, on average, university students pay 42% of the full cost of their degree and the Government pays 58%. Do you think that students should pay more, should pay less or is the current share about right?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other
Should pay less	31%	37%	18%	63%	26%
Should pay more	20%	13%	34%	7%	24%
Current share about right	37%	41%	38%	24%	39%
Don't know	12%	9%	10%	6%	11%

37% thought that the current share of students' cost of education is about right. Those most likely to think this were ALP voters (41%) and those aged 55-64 (41%)

31% thought that students should pay less. Those most likely to think this were Greens voters (63%), those aged 18-24 (38%) and those aged 25-34 (38%).

20% thought that students should pay more. Those most likely to think this were Liberal/National voters (34%) and those aged 65+ (31%).



Budget Surplus

Q How important is it that the Government returns the budget to surplus?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other
Total important	71%	63%	87%	49%	78%
Total not important	19%	28%	9%	43%	13%
Very important	31%	21%	47%	8%	38%
Somewhat important	40%	42%	40%	41%	40%
Not very important	15%	23%	7%	33%	11%
Not at all important	4%	5%	2%	10%	2%
Don't know	10%	9%	4%	8%	9%

71% thought that returning the budget to surplus was important. Those most likely to think this were Liberal/National voters (87% important), those earning over \$104,000 (78%) and those working full time (76%).

19% thought that returning the budget to surplus was not important. Those most likely to think this were Greens voters (43% not important) and ALP voters (28%).

Budget Surplus or Spending

Q Do you think it is more important for the Government to return the budget to surplus as soon as possible - which may mean cutting services and raising taxes - OR should they delay the return to surplus and maintain services and invest in infrastructure?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other
Return to surplus as soon as possible, cut services, raise taxes	18%	12%	28%	7%	16%
Delay return to surplus, maintain services, invest in infrastructure	65%	75%	59%	81%	67%
Don't know	18%	13%	12%	12%	17%

65% thought it was more important to delay a return to surplus, maintain services and invest in infrastructure. Those most likely to think this were Greens voters (81%) and ALP voters (75%).

18% it was more important to return to surplus as soon as possible. Those most likely to say think were Liberal/National voters (28%), those aged 65+ (22%) and those earning over \$104,000 (22%).

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.