

# The Essential Report

15 August 2017



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**Prepared By:** Essential Research

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**Data Supplied by:**



**AMSRS** 

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 10<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> August 2017 and is based on 1,032 respondents.

Aside from the standard question on voting intention, this week's report includes questions on the performance of the Government, opinion of the Government, tax rates, same sex marriage, and cost of living issues.

The methodology used to carry out this research is described in the appendix on page 13.

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 8/8/17	2 weeks ago 1/8/17	4 weeks ago 18/7/17	Election 2 Jul 16
Liberal	34%	34%	36%	33%	
National	3%	3%	3%	3%	
<b>Total Liberal/National</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>42.0%</b>
<b>Labor</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>34.7%</b>
Greens	9%	9%	10%	10%	10.2%
Nick Xenophon Team	2%	3%	4%	3%	
Pauline Hanson's One Nation	8%	8%	8%	7%	
Other/Independent	6%	5%	4%	6%	13.1%
<b>2 party preferred</b>					
Liberal National	<b>46%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>50.4%</b>
Labor	<b>54%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>49.6%</b>

NB. Sample = 1,815. 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.

## Government performance

Q How would you rate the performance of the Turnbull Coalition Government in their handling of the following issues?

	Total good	Total poor	Very good	Good	Average	Poor	Very poor	Don't know
Protecting Australia from terrorism	46%	16%	13%	33%	32%	7%	9%	5%
Managing the economy	30%	27%	7%	23%	38%	13%	14%	5%
Treatment of asylum seekers	30%	32%	11%	19%	33%	13%	19%	6%
Reducing the budget deficit	24%	34%	5%	19%	36%	18%	16%	6%
Funding health services and hospitals	22%	40%	4%	18%	33%	22%	18%	5%
Funding schools	21%	34%	4%	17%	37%	20%	14%	7%
Funding universities	20%	40%	5%	15%	32%	21%	19%	8%
Protecting the natural environment	19%	39%	5%	14%	36%	21%	18%	7%
Addressing climate change	19%	40%	6%	13%	35%	19%	21%	7%
A fair tax system	19%	38%	4%	15%	36%	19%	19%	6%
Implementing the NBN	18%	46%	3%	15%	31%	22%	24%	5%
Ensuring reliable and affordable energy	17%	51%	4%	13%	27%	22%	29%	5%

Overall, respondents think the Government is doing a poor job of handling key issues. On all items but two, respondents were more likely to think the Government's handling of issues was poor.

The only positive issues were protecting Australia from terrorism (46% good/16% poor) and managing the economy (30% good/27% poor).

They believed the Government was doing a particularly poor job of ensuring reliable and affordable energy (17% good/51% poor) and implementing the NBN (18% good/46% poor).

Only 19% think the Government is doing a good job of handling a fair tax system (38% poor).



## View of Federal Government

Q Which of the following statement best describe your view of the Federal Government?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other
I don't like their policies or the decisions they have been making	41%	64%	10%	69%	54%
I like their policies and am satisfied with the progress they are making	15%	8%	31%	9%	2%
I like their policies but they are not making enough progress in implementing them	28%	16%	49%	11%	31%
Don't know	16%	13%	11%	11%	13%

Respondents were divided strongly according to party preferences on the Government's policies. 41% said they don't like the Government's policies while 43% like their policies. However, for those who like their policies a majority (28%) believed they were not making enough progress in implementing them and while only 15% were satisfied with the progress they are making.

Among Liberal/National voters about half (49%) liked their policies but were dissatisfied with the progress they are making.



## Income tax rate

Q Australia’s current top income tax rate is 47% on earnings over \$180,000. Do you think this rate is too high, too low or about right?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other	Income less than \$600 pw	Income \$600-\$1,000 pw	Income \$1,000-\$1,500 pw	Income \$1,500-\$2,000 pw	Income \$2,000+ pw
Too high	33%	32%	38%	24%	29%	21%	26%	36%	36%	46%
Too low	12%	14%	12%	9%	20%	11%	13%	14%	13%	12%
About right	39%	40%	41%	48%	37%	44%	45%	33%	43%	35%
Don't know	16%	14%	9%	18%	15%	25%	16%	17%	7%	7%

33% think that the top income rate is too high, 12% think it is too low and 39% think it is about right.

38% of Liberal/National voters think it is too high while 40% of Labor voters and 48% of Greens voters think it is about right.

Opinions were related to personal income. Those on higher incomes were more likely to think the tax rate is too high – although even those on \$2,000+ pw were divided (46% too high and 47% too low or about right).





## Same-sex marriage vote

Q The Coalition Government has decided to make a second attempt to hold a plebiscite on same-sex marriage. If it does not pass the Senate, they will hold a voluntary postal vote (which does not need legislation). Do you approve or disapprove of this approach to resolving the issue of same-sex marriage?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other	Men	Women	Aged 18-34	Aged 35-54	Aged 55+
<b>Total approve</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>35%</b>
<b>Total disapprove</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>56%</b>
Strongly approve	14%	13%	15%	8%	15%	16%	12%	13%	14%	14%
Approve	25%	18%	34%	17%	22%	25%	25%	30%	24%	21%
Disapprove	17%	16%	18%	20%	20%	14%	20%	19%	16%	16%
Strongly disapprove	30%	39%	19%	49%	32%	33%	28%	23%	29%	40%
Don't know	14%	13%	13%	6%	11%	13%	15%	15%	16%	8%

Respondents were more likely to disapprove of the Government’s plan for addressing the issue of same-sex marriage. 39% approved but 47% disapproved.

Those most likely disapprove were Greens voters (69%) and Labor voters (55%) while 49% of Liberal/National voters approved.

Younger voters were more likely to approve of the Government’s decision – 43% of those aged 18-34 approved compared to 35% of those aged 55+.



## Income and cost of living

Q In the last two years, do you think your and your household's income has gone up more than the cost of living, fallen behind or stayed even with the cost of living?

	Total	Work full time	Work part time	Income less than \$600 pw	Income \$600-\$1,000 pw	Income \$1,000-\$1,500 pw	Income \$1,500 - \$2,000 pw	Income \$2,000+ pw	Oct 2014	Mar 2015	Nov 2015	Feb 2016
Gone up more	15%	22%	15%	11%	11%	13%	21%	21%	13%	15%	14%	13%
Fallen behind	53%	47%	54%	69%	58%	54%	50%	42%	48%	50%	54%	51%
Stayed even	25%	24%	27%	14%	25%	25%	26%	34%	31%	27%	26%	29%
Don't know	6%	7%	5%	6%	6%	8%	3%	3%	8%	7%	5%	7%

53% (up 2% since February 2016) believe that, in the last two years, their income has fallen behind the cost of living. 25% (down 4%) think it has stayed even with the cost of living and 15% (up 2%) think it has gone up more.

69% of those earning under \$600 pw and 58% of those earning \$600-1,000 pw think their income has fallen behind while 55% of those earning over \$2,000 pw think it has stayed the same or gone up.

## Financial situation

Q Which of the following statements best describes your financial situation?

	Total	Work full time	Work part time	Income less than \$600 pw	Income \$600-\$1,000 pw	Income \$1,000-\$1,500 pw	Income \$1,500 - \$2,000 pw	Income \$2,000+ pw	Oct 2014	Mar 2015	Feb 2016
I don't have enough money for basic essentials like housing food and electricity	8%	6%	9%	21%	7%	8%	6%	4%	7%	8%	6%
I have enough money for basic essentials but I cannot save any money	40%	35%	31%	53%	46%	41%	34%	28%	35%	39%	35%
I have enough money for basic essentials and I can save a little money	42%	45%	50%	22%	40%	45%	53%	48%	47%	44%	49%
I have enough money for basic essentials and I can save a lot of money	7%	11%	7%	1%	2%	4%	5%	19%	8%	7%	8%
Don't know	3%	3%	4%	3%	5%	2%	1%	1%	4%	2%	3%

42% say they have enough money for basic essentials and can save a little money and 40% say they have enough money for basic essentials but cannot save any money. Only 7% say they can save a lot of money.

Only 23% of those earning less than \$600 pw say they can save any money - compared to 67% of those earning over \$2,000 pw.

Overall, there has been a slight decline in financial situations since this question was asked in February last year – 48% (up 7%) say they cannot save any money and 49% (down 8%) say they can.



## Cost of living

Q Compared to two or three years ago is your household paying more or less for the following -

	Paying a lot more	Paying a little more	Paying about the same	Paying a little less	Paying a lot less	Don't know	Feb 2013 Paying a lot more	Mar 2014 Paying a lot more	Feb 2016 Paying a lot more
Electricity and gas	<b>59%</b>	25%	12%	1%	1%	2%	70%	62%	34%
Insurance	<b>31%</b>	38%	21%	3%	1%	7%	43%	36%	24%
Medical, dental	<b>30%</b>	33%	31%	2%	1%	3%	33%	32%	23%
Fresh food - fruit, vegetables, meat	<b>29%</b>	40%	26%	2%	<1%	2%	36%	36%	25%
Petrol	<b>27%</b>	32%	26%	6%	2%	6%	50%	56%	19%
Water	<b>26%</b>	39%	26%	2%	1%	7%	47%	40%	13%
Housing - mortgage or rent	<b>23%</b>	25%	33%	5%	3%	10%	24%	24%	14%
Packaged food	<b>21%</b>	38%	34%	3%	1%	4%	28%	26%	15%
Education	<b>18%</b>	20%	28%	3%	4%	27%	24%	21%	16%
Clothing	<b>14%</b>	30%	44%	8%	2%	3%	21%	17%	13%

Items which respondents said they were “paying a lot more” for were electricity and gas (59%), insurance (31%) and medical/dental (30%).

Since this question was asked in February last year, for all items, the perceptions of paying a lot more have increased substantially. However, these results are similar on most items to the surveys of 2013 and 2014.



## 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.