

The Essential Report

19 December 2017



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Prepared By: Essential Research

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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 15th to 18th December 2017 and is based on 1,019 respondents.

Aside from the standard question on voting intention, this week's report includes questions on political donations, perceptions of the last 12 months, expectations of 2018, taxation, relationships with other countries and foreign political interference

The methodology used to carry out this research is described in the appendix on page 17.

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 12/12/17	2 weeks ago 5/12/17	4 weeks ago 21/11/17	Election 2 Jul 16
Liberal	34%	33%	32%	32%	
National	3%	3%	3%	3%	
Total Liberal/National	37%	35%	35%	35%	42.0%
Labor	38%	38%	38%	38%	34.7%
Greens	9%	10%	9%	9%	10.2%
Nick Xenophon Team	2%	2%	2%	3%	
Pauline Hanson's One Nation	7%	7%	8%	8%	
Other/Independent	7%	7%	8%	7%	13.1%
2 party preferred					
Liberal National	47%	46%	45%	46%	50.4%
Labor	53%	54%	55%	54%	49.6%

NB. Sample = 1,817. 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.

Political donations

Q Would you support or oppose introducing the following requirement concerning political donation?

	Total support	Total oppose	Strongly support	Support	Oppose	Strongly oppose	Don't know	Total support (Jun 2017)	Total oppose (Jun 2017)
Political donations to be reported immediately by political parties, compared to annual reports at the moment	84%	6%	46%	38%	5%	1%	11%	78%	5%
All politicians to publicly disclose meetings with representatives of companies, donors or unions	82%	5%	44%	38%	4%	1%	12%	79%	6%
A ban on foreign donations	67%	16%	42%	25%	12%	4%	16%	64%	15%
A cap on donations of \$5000	59%	20%	27%	32%	16%	4%	22%	61%	15%
A ban on political donations by companies and unions	58%	22%	27%	31%	18%	4%	21%	60%	16%
All donations banned and all political party spending to be taxpayer funded	30%	50%	13%	17%	23%	27%	21%	30%	46%



Support by party preference	Total support	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other
Political donations to be reported immediately by political parties, compared to annual reports at the moment	84%	87%	86%	89%	89%
All politicians to publicly disclose meetings with representatives of companies, donors or unions	82%	83%	89%	83%	86%
A ban on foreign donations	67%	66%	74%	68%	75%
A cap on donations of \$5000	59%	63%	60%	58%	65%
A ban on political donations by companies and unions	58%	53%	63%	64%	65%
All donations banned and all political party spending to be taxpayer funded	30%	36%	29%	30%	25%

There was majority support for all listed reforms except taxpayer funding for political parties (30% support/50% oppose).

There was particularly strong support for immediate reporting of donations (84%, up 6% from June) and public disclosure of meetings (82%, up 3%).

There were few major differences by party preference.



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	2016 NET
The Australian economy	35%	24%	+11	5%	30%	35%	19%	5%	6%	-13	-13	-11	-19
Australian politics in general	18%	54%	-36	3%	15%	22%	32%	22%	6%	-62	-53	-41	-53
Large companies and corporations	39%	17%	+22	8%	31%	35%	13%	4%	10%	-9	+14	+5	+5
Small business	30%	32%	-2	5%	25%	31%	24%	8%	8%	-45	-28	-12	-22
Trade unions	19%	26%	-7	5%	14%	39%	18%	8%	17%	-25	-18	-27	-18
The average Australian	28%	34%	-6	5%	23%	34%	24%	10%	6%	-22	-23	-14	-18
Your personal financial situation	32%	31%	+1	4%	28%	35%	18%	13%	3%	-8	-11	-6	-8
Your workplace (workers)	50%	16%	+34	10%	40%	31%	11%	5%	3%	+8	-5	+14	+12
You and your family overall	48%	21%	+27	10%	38%	28%	14%	7%	3%	+18	+3	+21	+12
The planet	20%	42%	-22	3%	17%	32%	29%	13%	6%	-	-		-32

Respondents believed that 2016 has been a relatively good year for large companies (+22), your workplace (+34), you and your family overall (+27) and the Australian economy (+11). It was considered a particularly bad year for Australian politics in general (-36).

Relative to 2016 (as measured in December last year), this year was considered substantially better on all measures – but especially for the economy (up 30), small business (up 20) and your workplace (up 22).



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	2016 NET
The Australian economy	36%	24%	+12	5%	31%	32%	19%	5%	8%	-10	-10	+2	-17
Australian politics in general	21%	42%	-21	3%	18%	29%	26%	16%	9%	-24	-29	-5	-37
Large companies and corporations	42%	15%	+27	8%	34%	32%	11%	4%	12%	-	+13	+14	+8
Small business	32%	27%	+5	4%	28%	30%	21%	6%	11%	-24	-17	+3	-10
Trade unions	21%	23%	-2	5%	16%	37%	16%	7%	19%	-26	-16	-16	-14
The average Australian	31%	29%	+2	4%	27%	32%	21%	8%	8%	-9	-17	-2	-12
Your personal financial situation	36%	24%	+12	7%	29%	33%	15%	9%	6%	+6	-	+12	+6
Your workplace (workers)	50%	13%	+37	9%	41%	30%	9%	4%	7%	+15	-	+21	+20
You and your family overall	48%	17%	+31	10%	38%	28%	10%	7%	7%	+25	+10	+28	+21
The planet	21%	36%	-15	3%	18%	34%	24%	12%	9%	-	-	-	-27%

Overall, there was a very positive outlook for large companies and corporations (net +27), your workplace (+37), and you and your family overall (+31). Expectations were negative for Australian politics in general (-21) and the planet (-15).

Compared to last year, respondents were more optimistic about all items measured.



Level of taxation

Q Do you think the following pay too much tax, not enough tax or about the right amount?

	Pay too much	Don't pay enough	Pay about right amount	Don't know	Jan 2017 Pay too much	Jan 2017 Don't pay enough	Jan 2017 Pay about right amount	Jan 2017 Don't know
People on low incomes	52%	6%	32%	10%	46%	7%	34%	13%
People on average incomes	45%	7%	40%	8%	43%	6%	39%	12%
You personally	35%	7%	46%	13%	39%	5%	42%	14%
Small businesses	41%	10%	38%	12%	37%	8%	39%	17%
Retirees on large incomes	16%	31%	32%	22%	13%	31%	31%	24%
Religious organisations	5%	53%	20%	19%	3%	58%	18%	21%
People on high incomes	9%	63%	19%	9%	11%	59%	18%	12%
Mining companies	6%	61%	17%	16%	5%	61%	13%	21%
Large businesses	7%	69%	13%	11%	6%	65%	13%	16%
Large international companies (such as Google and Apple)	5%	72%	10%	13%	2%	72%	9%	17%



From the groups listed, people on low income (52%), people on average incomes (45%), you personally (35%) and small businesses (41%) and were the groups respondents were most likely to think pay too much tax.

More than half of respondents believe that large international companies (72%), large businesses (69%), mining companies (61%), people on high incomes (63%) and religious organisations (53%) do not pay enough tax.

Results were generally similar to when this question was asked in January.



Company tax cuts

Q Do you approve or disapprove of the Government giving \$50 billion in tax cuts to medium and large businesses?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other	Oct 2017
Total approve	29%	21%	46%	16%	20%	30%
Total disapprove	54%	67%	37%	70%	68%	50%
Strongly approve	8%	7%	12%	5%	5%	8%
Approve	21%	14%	34%	11%	15%	22%
Disapprove	29%	32%	25%	35%	33%	28%
Strongly disapprove	25%	35%	12%	35%	35%	22%
Don't know	17%	12%	17%	15%	12%	20%

29% approve of the Government giving \$50 billion in tax cuts to medium and large businesses and 54% disapprove (up 4% since October). Nearly half of Liberal National voters approve, and more than two-thirds of Labor, Greens and other voters disapprove.

Most important tax cuts

Q Do you think it is more important to give tax cuts to businesses or to cut personal income tax?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other
Tax cuts for businesses	8%	10%	10%	6%	5%
Cut personal income tax	47%	52%	45%	54%	54%
Both equally important	33%	29%	39%	31%	32%
Don't know	11%	9%	6%	9%	9%

47% think it is more important to cut personal income tax than to give tax cuts to businesses. Only 8% think it is more important to give tax cuts to businesses and 33% think they are both equally important.

More than half of Labor, Greens and other voters think personal tax cuts are more important – however, views of Liberal National voters were not very dissimilar (45%). No more than 10% of any voter group thought tax cuts for businesses was most important.

Relationships with other countries

Q Do you think Australia currently has good or poor relationships with the following countries?

	Total good	Total poor	Very good	Good	Neither good nor poor	Poor	Very poor	Don't know	Aug 2014 good	Aug 2014 poor
New Zealand	76%	4%	30%	46%	12%	3%	1%	7%	87%	2%
United Kingdom	72%	3%	24%	48%	15%	2%	1%	9%	86%	2%
USA	65%	7%	16%	49%	20%	6%	1%	7%	88%	2%
Japan	60%	6%	14%	46%	22%	5%	1%	13%	68%	5%
China	48%	15%	6%	42%	28%	12%	3%	8%	65%	7%
India	44%	11%	5%	39%	30%	9%	2%	14%	48%	9%
Indonesia	34%	21%	4%	30%	33%	17%	4%	13%	31%	30%
Russia	17%	28%	2%	15%	39%	21%	7%	16%	10%	48%

More than seven in ten think that Australia has good relationships with New Zealand and United Kingdom. About two thirds think relationships with USA and Japan are good

There were mixed opinions on the relationship with Indonesia (34% good/21% poor) and only 17% thought our relationship with Russia is “good”.

Since this question was asked in August 2014, perceptions have changed substantially for relationships with United Kingdom (down 14%), USA (down 23%) and China (down 17%).

Political interference by other countries

Q Do you think that interference in Australian politics by foreign countries is a major problem, minor problem, or not a problem at all?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other
A major problem	37%	37%	37%	38%	48%
A minor problem	36%	38%	40%	37%	32%
Not a problem at all	12%	13%	13%	9%	6%
Don't know	16%	11%	10%	15%	14%

37% think that interference in Australian politics by foreign countries is a major problem and 36% think it is a minor problem. Voters for other parties are more likely to think it is a major problem (48%) but Labor, LNP and Greens voters hold similar views. 49% of those aged 55+ think it is a major problem.

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.

