

The Essential Report

14 January 2019



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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 Qualtrics. The survey was conducted online from 9th to 13th January 2019 and is based on 1,089 respondents.

Aside from the standard question on voting intention, this week's report includes questions on preferred leader, crime, multiculturalism, NBN and pill testing.

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	3 weeks ago 18/12/18	5 weeks ago 04/12/18	Election 02/07/16
Liberal	34%	34%	34%	
National	4%	3%	4%	
Total Liberal/National	38%	37%	38%	42.0%
Labor	38%	36%	36%	34.7%
Greens	10%	11%	11%	10.2%
Pauline Hanson's One Nation	7%	7%	7%	
Other/Independent	8%	9%	9%	13.1%
2 party preferred				
Liberal/National	47%	47%	47%	50.4%
Labor	53%	53%	53%	49.6%

NB. 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.

Scott Morrison

Q Do you approve or disapprove of the job Scott Morrison is doing as Prime Minister?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other	Dec 2018	Nov 2018	Oct 2018	Sep 2018
Total approve	43%	24%	77%	24%	36%	42%	41%	43%	37%
Total disapprove	39%	62%	13%	53%	49%	34%	37%	28%	31%
Strongly approve	9%	5%	19%	3%	3%	10%	10%	10%	9%
Approve	34%	19%	58%	22%	33%	32%	31%	33%	28%
Disapprove	25%	38%	11%	35%	32%	19%	21%	17%	17%
Strongly disapprove	14%	24%	2%	19%	17%	15%	16%	11%	14%
Don't know	18%	14%	10%	22%	15%	24%	23%	28%	33%

43% approved of the job Scott Morrison is doing as Prime Minister (up 1%pt from last month) and 39% disapproved (up 5%pts from 34% in December). Just under a fifth of people (18%) could not give an opinion of his leadership of the country.

77% (no change from Dec'18) of Liberal/National voters approved of the job Scott Morrison is doing, compared to 24% of ALP voters, 24% of Greens and 36% of other voters.

By gender, men were 47% approve/42% disapprove, and of women 38% approve/37% disapprove.

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	Dec 2018	Nov 2018	Oct 2018	Sep 2018	Jun 2018	Mar 2018	Dec 2017	Sep 2017	June 2017
Total approve	35%	66%	22%	29%	15%	35%	38%	33%	35%	33%	37%	36%	36%	34%
Total disapprove	47%	21%	68%	41%	73%	43%	44%	45%	43%	46%	44%	45%	47%	43%
Strongly approve	8%	20%	4%	5%	1%	8%	8%	8%	8%	6%	8%	7%	7%	5%
Approve	27%	47%	19%	25%	14%	27%	30%	25%	27%	27%	29%	29%	29%	29%
Disapprove	25%	17%	30%	30%	36%	21%	24%	23%	21%	23%	23%	23%	25%	28%
Strongly disapprove	21%	4%	38%	11%	37%	22%	20%	22%	22%	23%	21%	22%	22%	15%
Don't know	18%	13%	10%	30%	12%	22%	18%	23%	22%	21%	19%	19%	17%	23%

35% approved of the job Bill Shorten is doing as Opposition Leader (no change from last month), and 47% disapproved (up 4%pts from 43%).

66% of ALP voters approved of the job Bill Shorten is doing, compared to 29% of Greens voters and 22% of Liberal/National voters.

By gender, men were 42% approve/46% disapprove and women 29% approve/47% disapprove. Bill Shorten has positive approval among 18-34 year olds, with 41% approving and 34% disapproving. However 57% of those aged over 55 disapprove of his performance as opposition leader, with just 34% approving.



Preferred Prime Minister

Q Who do you think would make the better Prime Minister out of Scott Morrison and Bill Shorten?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other	Dec 2018	Nov 2018	Oct 2018	Sep 2018	Sep 2018
Scott Morrison	42%	16%	77%	25%	48%	40%	41%	42%	39%	39%
Bill Shorten	30%	63%	11%	39%	10%	29%	29%	27%	27%	29%
Don't know	28%	21%	12%	37%	42%	31%	29%	31%	34%	32%

42% thought that Scott Morrison would make the better Prime Minister (up 2%pts from last month), and 30% thought Bill Shorten would be better (up 1%pt). 28% did not know who would make a better Prime Minister.

The results were split by party, with 77% of Liberal/National voters saying that Scott Morrison would be a better Prime Minister (no change from last month), and 63% of Labor voters saying Bill Shorten would (up 7%pts from 56% in December).

Greens voters preferred Bill Shorten (39%) to Scott Morrison (25%).

Both men (45% vs. 32%) and women (39% vs. 28%) would prefer Scott Morrison to Bill Shorten as Prime Minister.



Crime

Q Do you think the following types of crime have increased or decreased over the last few years?

	NET: Decreased	NET: Increased	Decreased a lot	Decreased a little	Stayed about the same	Increased a little	Increased a lot	Jan 18 NET: Increased
Drug-related crime	7%	66%	2%	4%	28%	29%	37%	76%
Youth gang crime	7%	65%	2%	5%	28%	26%	38%	70%
Domestic violence	8%	59%	2%	6%	34%	32%	26%	63%
Violent crime (e.g. assault, murder)	10%	55%	2%	8%	35%	32%	23%	60%
Burglary	11%	49%	2%	9%	39%	28%	22%	57%
White-collar crime (e.g. fraud, corporate crime)	8%	48%	2%	6%	44%	29%	20%	55%
Car theft	13%	44%	3%	10%	43%	25%	19%	53%

The majority believe that drug-related crime (66%), Youth gang crime (65%), domestic violence (59%) and violent crime (55%) have all increased over the past few years. Fewer people thought all types of crime were increasing than 12 months ago.

People aged 55+ were more likely to believe crime has increased in the past few years, while those aged 18-34 were less likely.



Q And which of these types of crime are the most important for the Government to address?

	NET: Top 3	Most Important	2 nd most important	3 rd most important	Jan 18 NET: Top 3
Violent crime (e.g. assault, murder)	65%	25%	20%	20%	62%
Drug-related crime	64%	20%	22%	22%	72%
Domestic violence	63%	25%	24%	15%	67%
Youth gang crime	52%	18%	18%	17%	53%
White-collar crime (e.g. fraud, corporate crime)	29%	8%	9%	12%	28%
Burglary	16%	2%	5%	9%	13%
Car theft	10%	3%	3%	4%	6%

About two-thirds (65%) believe addressing violent crime should be a top priority for the government, followed by drug-related crime (64%) and domestic violence (63%).

Car theft (10%) and burglary (16%) are seen as lesser priorities.



Pill testing

Q Thinking about drug policy, do you support or oppose pill testing services (where trained counsellors provide risk reduction advice informed by on-site, laboratory analysis of people’s drugs)

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other	Men	Women	Aged 18-34	Aged 35-54	Aged 55+	Dec 18
NET: Support	63%	73%	57%	74%	58%	65%	62%	73%	57%	61%	59%
NET: Oppose	24%	18%	33%	17%	30%	28%	21%	17%	23%	32%	17%
Strongly support	30%	36%	23%	39%	31%	28%	31%	37%	26%	28%	23%
Support	34%	37%	33%	36%	28%	36%	31%	36%	31%	34%	36%
Oppose	12%	10%	17%	6%	12%	12%	12%	12%	12%	12%	8%
Strongly oppose	13%	8%	15%	11%	17%	16%	9%	5%	11%	20%	9%
Don't know	12%	9%	10%	9%	12%	8%	17%	11%	20%	7%	25%

Over six in ten Australians (63%) support pill testing services. The majority of Labor (73%) and Coalition (57%) voters support pill testing as well as both genders (65% men and 62% women support) and age groups.

Support for these services has increased 4%pts from last month (up from 59% support in Dec'18).



Immigration & Multiculturalism

Q Do you think the levels of immigration into Australia over the past ten years has been...?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other	Men	Women	Aged 18-34	Aged 35-54	Aged 55+	Apr 18
NET: Too high	56%	47%	67%	28%	77%	55%	57%	38%	58%	69%	64%
NET: Too low	12%	16%	5%	29%	3%	11%	12%	17%	11%	8%	5%
Much too high	33%	26%	37%	11%	57%	32%	34%	19%	35%	42%	37%
A little too high	23%	21%	30%	16%	20%	23%	23%	19%	23%	28%	27%
About right	26%	32%	25%	38%	16%	31%	22%	36%	24%	20%	23%
A little too low	7%	10%	4%	14%	2%	6%	8%	10%	7%	5%	4%
Much too low	4%	7%	1%	15%	1%	5%	4%	6%	4%	3%	1%
Don't know	6%	5%	3%	6%	3%	3%	9%	9%	7%	3%	7%

Over half of Australians (56%) think that the level of immigration into Australia over the last ten years has been too high, but this has decreased from 64% in April 2018. 26% think it is about right and only 12% think it is too low.

Over 60% of Liberal/National voters (67%) think it is too high.

38% of people aged 18-35 think the immigration level is too high, this rises to 58% of 35-54 years olds and 69% among those aged over 55.



Q To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements regarding multiculturalism in Australia?

	NET: Agree	NET: Disagree	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Immigration has made a positive contribution to Australian society	67%	26%	27%	40%	16%	10%	7%
Multiculturalism enriches the social and economic lives of Australians	67%	27%	27%	40%	18%	9%	6%
Multiculturalism causes social division and religious extremism in Australia	53%	40%	19%	34%	24%	16%	7%

Over two-thirds of Australians agree that ‘Immigration has made a positive contribution to Australian society’ (67%) and ‘Multiculturalism enriches the social and economic lives of Australians’ (67%).

However, over half (53%) expressed a concern that ‘Multiculturalism causes social division and religious extremism in Australia’. Concern was highest among those aged over 55 years (60%).



Far-right rally

Q There was a far-right rally held in Melbourne last week opposing immigration the alleged crimes committed by African “gangs” in the city.

To what extent do you support agree or disagree with each of the following statements relating to this rally?

	NET: Agree	NET: Disagree	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
There is no place in Australian society for the use of racist and fascist symbols used by participants in the rally	74%	17%	48%	26%	10%	7%	9%
All Australians have the right to peacefully protest, no matter how extreme their views	73%	19%	31%	42%	14%	5%	8%
Those attending the rally do not represent the views of the majority of Australians	60%	27%	31%	29%	17%	10%	13%
Scott Morrison demonstrated poor leadership by not immediately condemning the rally, and those who attended it, in stronger terms	48%	36%	21%	27%	23%	13%	16%
It was appropriate for Queensland senator Fraser Anning to use taxpayer money to attend the rally	22%	66%	8%	14%	18%	48%	12%

While 73% of Australians believe that 'All Australians have the right to peacefully protest, no matter how extreme their views', a similar proportion (74%) also feel agree that 'There is no place in Australian society for the use of racist and fascist symbols used by participants in the rally'.

Six in ten believe that 'Those attending the rally do not represent the views of the majority of Australians'.

Almost half (48%) agreed that 'Scott Morrison demonstrated poor leadership by not immediately condemning the rally, and those who attended it, in stronger terms'.

Just 22% agreed 'It was appropriate for Queensland senator Fraser Anning to use taxpayer money to attend the rally' with 48% strongly disagreeing with this statement and 66% disagreeing overall.



NBN

Q Is your home or workplace connected to the NBN?

	Is your home connected to the NBN?	Is your workplace connected to the NBN?	NET: Home or work connected to NBN
Yes	59%	28%	65%
No	38%	19%	33%
Don't know	3%	15%	2%
Not applicable	-	37%	-

Almost two-thirds (65%) of Australians are now connected to the NBN – either in their home (59%) or workplace (28%).

Residents say NBN connection has been supplied to 71% of properties outside state capital cities and 53% within the main metropolitan areas.

Q Would you say that your NBN internet service is better or worse than your previous service in terms of speed and reliability?

	All people with NBN connection at home/work	All people with NBN connection at home	All people with NBN connection at work
NET: Better	51%	52%	58%
NET: Worse	17%	16%	13%
Much better	24%	25%	28%
A little better	27%	28%	29%
About the same	30%	30%	28%
A little worse	10%	9%	8%
Much worse	7%	7%	4%
Don't know	2%	1%	2%

An NBN connection has improved the speed and reliability of internet connection in just over half of cases (51%), with 30% of those with NBN connection noticing no difference, and 17% claiming a worse service.



Q Would you approve or disapprove of privatising the NBN when it is completed in 2020?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+
NET: Approve	29%	27%	39%	24%	20%	36%	23%	42%	31%	17%
NET: Disapprove	44%	52%	38%	45%	51%	45%	43%	32%	41%	57%
Strongly approve	9%	10%	11%	5%	5%	12%	6%	14%	11%	3%
Somewhat approve	20%	17%	28%	19%	15%	24%	17%	28%	20%	14%
Somewhat disapprove	18%	19%	20%	15%	20%	18%	18%	14%	18%	21%
Strongly disapprove	26%	33%	18%	30%	31%	27%	25%	18%	23%	36%
Don't know	27%	21%	23%	30%	29%	20%	34%	26%	28%	26%

Under a third (29%) approve of privatising the NBN when it is completed in 2020 and 44% disapprove.

Most voter groups were more likely to disapprove of privatization except for Liberal/National voters who were split 39% approve and 38% disapprove.



Appendix: Methodology, margin of error and professional standards

The data gathered for this report is gathered from a fortnightly online omnibus conducted by Qualtrics.

Every two weeks, the team at Essential considers 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 current media and social issues.

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 online omnibus is live from the Wednesday night and closed on the following Sunday. Incentives are offered to participants. 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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