

The Essential Report

11 March 2019



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Prepared By: Essential Research

Data Supplied by:



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 6th to 11th March 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, Trust in Political Parties, Trust in Institutions, Climate Change, Border Security and attitudes towards the Sydney Mardi Gras Festival.

The methodology used to carry out this research is described in the appendix at the end of this report.

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	2 Weeks ago 25/02/19	4 weeks ago 11/02/19	Election 02/07/16
Liberal	34%	35%	31%	
National	3%	3%	3%	
Total Liberal/National	37%	38%	34%	42.0%
Labor	38%	37%	38%	34.7%
Greens	8%	9%	10%	10.2%
Pauline Hanson's One Nation	7%	6%	7%	
Other/Independent	10%	10%	11%	13.1%
2 party preferred				
Liberal/National	47%	48%	45%	50.4%
Labor	53%	52%	55%	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	Jan 2019	Dec 2018	Nov 2018	Oct 2018	Sep 2018
Total approve	43%	21%	79%	18%	43%	43%	42%	41%	43%	37%
Total disapprove	41%	66%	15%	62%	42%	39%	34%	37%	28%	31%
Strongly approve	12%	6%	24%	4%	7%	9%	10%	10%	10%	9%
Approve	31%	15%	55%	14%	36%	34%	32%	31%	33%	28%
Disapprove	23%	35%	12%	26%	26%	25%	19%	21%	17%	17%
Strongly disapprove	17%	31%	3%	35%	17%	14%	15%	16%	11%	14%
Don't know	16%	13%	6%	20%	15%	18%	24%	23%	28%	33%

43% approved of the job Scott Morrison is doing as Prime Minister (no change from January) and 41% disapproved (up 2%pts from 39% in January). 16% could not give an opinion of his leadership of the country.

79% (up 2% pts from 77% in January) of Liberal/National voters approved of the job Scott Morrison is doing, compared to 21% of ALP voters, 18% of Greens and 43% of other voters.

By gender, men were 48% approve/40% disapprove, and of women 39% approve/42% 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	Jan 2019	Dec 2018	Nov 2018	Oct 2018	Sep 2018	Jun 2018	Mar 2018	Dec 2017	Sep 2017
Total approve	38%	70%	22%	37%	15%	35%	35%	38%	33%	35%	33%	37%	36%	36%
Total disapprove	44%	16%	68%	35%	72%	47%	43%	44%	45%	43%	46%	44%	45%	47%
Strongly approve	8%	18%	5%	7%	1%	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%	6%	8%	7%	7%
Approve	29%	53%	17%	31%	13%	27%	27%	30%	25%	27%	27%	29%	29%	29%
Disapprove	22%	13%	27%	29%	29%	25%	21%	24%	23%	21%	23%	23%	23%	25%
Strongly disapprove	23%	3%	41%	7%	43%	21%	22%	20%	22%	22%	23%	21%	22%	22%
Don't know	18%	14%	10%	27%	13%	18%	22%	18%	23%	22%	21%	19%	19%	17%

38% approved of the job Bill Shorten is doing as Opposition Leader (up 3%pts from January), and 44% disapproved (down 3%pts from 47%).

70% of ALP voters approved of the job Bill Shorten is doing, compared to 37% of Greens voters and 22% of Liberal/National voters.

By gender, men were 41% approve/46% disapprove and women 34% approve/43% disapprove. Bill Shorten has positive approval among 18-34 year olds, with 44% approving and 32% disapproving. However 58% of those aged over 55 disapprove of his performance as opposition leader, with just 32% 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	Jan 2019	Dec 2018	Nov 2018	Oct 2018	Sep 2018	Sep 2018
Scott Morrison	44%	14%	82%	23%	54%	42%	40%	41%	42%	39%	39%
Bill Shorten	31%	66%	8%	40%	10%	30%	29%	29%	27%	27%	29%
Don't know	26%	20%	10%	36%	36%	28%	31%	29%	31%	34%	32%

44% thought that Scott Morrison would make the better Prime Minister (up 2%pts from last month), and 31% thought Bill Shorten would be better (up 1%pt). 26% did not know who would make a better Prime Minister.

The results were split by party, with 82% of Liberal/National voters saying that Scott Morrison would be a better Prime Minister (up 5%pts from January), and 66% of Labor voters saying Bill Shorten would (up 3%pts from 63% in January).

Greens voters preferred Bill Shorten (40%) to Scott Morrison (23%).

Both men (47% vs. 29%) and women (41% vs. 32%) would prefer Scott Morrison to Bill Shorten as Prime Minister.

Trust

Q Which party would you trust most to handle the following issues?

	Liberal Party	Labor Party	Unsure	Difference between Liberal and Labor
Border Protection	45%	26%	29%	+19
Security and the war on terrorism	42%	26%	32%	+16
Management of the economy	44%	29%	27%	+15
Controlling interest rates	39%	27%	34%	+12
Managing population growth	37%	27%	35%	+10
Political leadership	37%	32%	32%	+5
Ensuring a fair taxation system	35%	36%	29%	-1
Treatment of asylum seekers	33%	34%	33%	-1
Ensuring a quality water supply	32%	33%	35%	-2
Protecting Australian jobs and protection of local industries	36%	39%	25%	-3
Standing up to big business	33%	37%	30%	-5
Ensuring the quality of Australia's health system	32%	39%	29%	-6
Housing affordability	30%	38%	32%	-7
Ensuring a quality education for all children	32%	39%	29%	-8
Protecting the environment	28%	36%	36%	-8
Addressing climate change	27%	36%	37%	-10
Fair wages and workplace conditions	28%	46%	26%	-18



More people trust the Liberal party than Labor on Border Protection, Security and the war on terrorism, Management of the economy, Controlling interest rates, Managing population growth and Political leadership.

Policy areas in which there is more trust in Labor include Fair wages and workplace conditions, Addressing climate change, Protecting the environment and Ensuring a quality education for children.



Trust in Institutions

Q How much trust do you have in the following institutions and organisations?

	NET: Total Trust	A lot of trust	Some trust	A little trust	No trust	Unsure	Sep 2018	Oct 2017	Sep 2016
Federal police	66%	28%	37%	21%	9%	4%	70%	71%	63%
State police	66%	28%	38%	20%	10%	4%	67%	67%	63%
The High Court	58%	23%	35%	23%	13%	6%	61%	61%	57%
The ABC	51%	19%	32%	27%	14%	8%	54%	52%	53%
Charitable organisations	50%	13%	37%	30%	14%	6%	47%	46%	43%
The Reserve Bank	49%	18%	31%	26%	17%	9%	50%	49%	47%
Your local council	43%	10%	33%	33%	18%	6%	42%	38%	36%
Environment groups	43%	14%	29%	28%	21%	7%	42%	42%	39%
The Commonwealth public service	42%	10%	32%	35%	14%	9%	39%	38%	36%
State Parliament	36%	9%	27%	31%	27%	6%	31%	31%	26%
Federal Parliament	35%	10%	25%	29%	29%	8%	28%	30%	26%
Business groups	31%	5%	26%	37%	23%	9%	29%	28%	27%
Trade unions	31%	7%	23%	26%	33%	10%	25%	25%	25%
Religious organisations	27%	7%	20%	24%	42%	7%	28%	26%	26%
Political parties	22%	4%	17%	34%	37%	7%	15%	18%	14%

Trust is highest for the Federal and State police (66%), the High Court (58%). More than half of Australians have trust in the ABC (51%) and half trust charitable organisations (50%).

Trust is lowest for political parties (22%) and religious organisations (27%), Trade Unions (31%) and Business groups (31%).



Border Security

Since the Parliament passed legislation allowing refugees on Manus Island and Nauru to be evacuated to receive medical attention, the Government has reopened Christmas Island processing centre and warned that people smugglers will restart the boats.

Q Which of the following statements most closely aligns to your view of the issue?

	Total	Male	Female	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other	Aged 18-34	Aged 35-54	Aged 55+
The Government is genuinely concerned about border protection	52%	54%	50%	31%	81%	29%	53%	52%	47%	56%
The Government is using border protection as a political ploy	48%	46%	50%	69%	19%	71%	47%	48%	53%	44%

Overall, voters are split on the issue of border protection with 52% believing the latest developments represent a genuine concern for protection, and 48% believing it to be a political ploy.

Climate Change

Q Do you believe that there is fairly conclusive evidence that climate change is happening and caused by human activity or do you believe that the evidence is still not in and we may just be witnessing a normal fluctuation in the earth’s climate which happens from time to time?

	Total	Male	Female	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other	Aged 18-34	Aged 35-54	Aged 55+	Oct 2018	Sep 2017	Aug 2016
Climate change is happening and is caused by human activity	62%	58%	65%	75%	53%	84%	48%	72%	63%	52%	63%	64%	57%
We are just witnessing a normal fluctuation in the earth’s climate	27%	29%	24%	16%	38%	7%	41%	16%	24%	39%	25%	24%	26%
Don't know	12%	12%	11%	10%	9%	9%	12%	12%	13%	9%	13%	12%	17%

62% (down 1% since October last year) agree that climate change is happening and is caused by human activity and 27% (up 2%pts from 25%) believe that we may just be witnessing a normal fluctuation in the earth’s climate.

By age groups, those aged under 35 split 72%/16% and those aged 55+ split 52%/39%. People with higher education were more likely to think climate change is happening and is caused by human activity – those with university degrees split 71%/22%.



Climate Change

Q As far as you know, do you think Australia is doing enough, not enough or too much to address climate change?

	Total	Male	Female	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other	Aged 18-34	Aged 35-54	Aged 55+	Dec 2018	Oct 2018	Sep 2017
Not doing enough	51%	43%	58%	64%	34%	79%	46%	58%	48%	48%	53%	56%	56%
Doing enough	27%	31%	23%	18%	43%	10%	28%	26%	26%	29%	24%	23%	20%
Doing too much	11%	16%	6%	8%	15%	2%	16%	8%	9%	15%	9%	7%	8%
Don't know	12%	10%	13%	10%	9%	8%	10%	8%	18%	9%	14%	13%	16%

Just over half (51%) think Australia is not doing enough to address climate change. This has not statistically changed from December 2018.

Those people most likely to think Australia was not doing enough include women (58%), Greens voters (79%) and Labor voters (64%).

Mardi Gras

Q To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about Sydney’s Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras, which was held this past weekend?

	NET: Agree	NET: Disagree	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
The Mardi Gras parade shows the diversity of the LGBTIQ community in Australia and around the world	58%	18%	29%	30%	18%	6%	11%	6%
Mardi Gras is an important celebration of the LGBTIQ community in Australia	56%	19%	32%	25%	19%	6%	13%	5%
Mardi Gras helps me to understand the LGBTIQ community	37%	28%	17%	20%	30%	11%	17%	6%

Over half believe Mardi Gras celebrations show the diversity of the LGBTIQ community (58%) and that it’s an important celebration (56%). Over a third (37%) feel it helps understanding of the LGBTIQ community.

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.

All Essential Research staff hold Australian Market and Social Research Society (AMSRS) membership and are bound by professional codes of behaviour.