

The Essential Report

08 April 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 4th April 2019 to 7th April 2019 and is based on 1,069 respondents.

Aside from the standard question on voting intention, this week's report includes questions on budget reaction and ways to manage energy prices.

The methodology used to carry out this research is described in the appendix at the end of the 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 25/03/19	4 weeks ago 11/03/19	Election 02/07/16
Liberal	36%	35%	34%	
National	3%	4%	3%	
Total Liberal/National	38%	39%	37%	42.0%
Labor	35%	36%	38%	34.7%
Greens	11%	10%	8%	10.2%
Pauline Hanson's One Nation	5%	7%	7%	
Other/Independent	10%	8%	10%	13.1%
2 party preferred				
Liberal/National	48%	48%	47%	50.4%
Labor	52%	52%	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.

Federal Budget Approval

Q Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the Federal Budget that was handed down on Tuesday 2nd April?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Liberal / National	Vote Greens	NET: Vote Other
NET: Approve	51%	39%	79%	32%	48%
NET: Disapprove	27%	45%	8%	44%	28%
Strongly approve	11%	5%	23%	2%	8%
Somewhat approve	40%	34%	56%	29%	39%
Somewhat disapprove	18%	28%	7%	28%	17%
Strongly disapprove	9%	16%	1%	16%	11%
Don't know	21%	16%	13%	24%	25%

- Just over half (51%) of voters approve of the 2019 Budget, with 27% disapproving and 21% unsure.
- Approval was highest among Coalition voters (79%), males (57%), those aged over 55 (57%), and those with an annual household income of between \$52k and \$104k (58%).
- However approval was lowest among Greens (32%) and Labour voters (39%), and those not in paid employment (38%).

Federal Budget Approval

Q Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the Federal Budget that was handed down on Tuesday 2nd April?

	2019 Budget	2018 Budget	2017 Budget
NET: Approve	51%	44%	41%
NET: Disapprove	27%	28%	33%
Strongly approve	11%	5%	5%
Somewhat approve	40%	39%	36%
Somewhat disapprove	18%	19%	23%
Strongly disapprove	9%	9%	10%
Don't know	21%	28%	25%

- The 2019 Budget has been met with higher approval than the previous two Budgets. Approval in 2019 is 7%pts higher than last year (44%) and 10%pts higher than 2017.
- Those disapproving of the Budget is similar in 2019 and 2018 (27% and 28%) and slightly lower in 2017, when 33% disapproved.

Approval of Budget Announcements

Q Do you approve or disapprove of the following measures contained in the Budget?

	NET: Strongly / Somewhat approve	NET: Strongly / Somewhat disapprove	Strongly approve	Somewhat approve	Somewhat disapprove	Strongly disapprove	Unsure
Investing \$100 billion in national infrastructure spending over the next ten years	76%	13%	30%	46%	9%	5%	11%
Delivering a tax rebate for workers earning up to \$90,000	75%	15%	34%	41%	10%	5%	10%
Running a \$7.1 billion Budget surplus in 2019-20	62%	20%	27%	35%	15%	5%	18%
Flattening tax rates from 2024, thereby cutting taxes for the highest income earners	42%	47%	14%	28%	19%	28%	12%
Putting \$1.5 billion previously allocated to NDIS disability funding back into the general accounts	37%	50%	14%	23%	23%	27%	13%

- The announcement to invest \$100 billion in infrastructure projects was the most popular of those tested, with just over three-quarters (76%) approving. This was closely followed by 75% of voters approving of a tax rebate for workers earning up to \$90,000.
- More people disapproved than approved of the proposals to flatten tax rates (47% vs. 42%) and the re-allocation of NDIS funding (50% vs. 37%).

Approval of Budget Announcements

Q Do you approve or disapprove of the following measures contained in the Budget?

NET: Approve	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Liberal / National	Vote Greens	NET: Vote Other
Investing \$100 billion in national infrastructure spending over the next ten years	76%	79%	84%	67%	74%
Delivering a tax rebate for workers earning up to \$90,000	75%	77%	86%	59%	69%
Running a \$7.1 billion Budget surplus in 2019-20	62%	53%	82%	41%	68%
Flattening tax rates from 2024, thereby cutting taxes for the highest income earners	42%	30%	64%	26%	37%
Putting \$1.5 billion previously allocated to NDIS disability funding back into the general accounts	37%	31%	50%	28%	37%

- Coalition voters were strongly supportive of infrastructure project proposals (84% approving), tax rebate (86%) and the projected return to surplus (82%).



Agreement with Budget Statements

Q Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the Budget?

	NET: Strongly / Somewhat agree	NET: Strongly / Somewhat disagree	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
The Government only made its spending pledges because they are in danger of losing the election	57%	26%	28%	29%	23%	13%	7%
This Budget is more about improving the Government's popularity than improving the economy	54%	36%	25%	29%	24%	14%	8%
Providing adequate funding disability services is more important than returning the Budget to surplus	53%	42%	23%	30%	29%	13%	5%
This Budget will benefit the wealthy more than ordinary Australians	47%	46%	23%	24%	30%	16%	7%
Overall, the Budget is fair and balanced	32%	55%	7%	24%	35%	20%	14%

- Over half of voters agreed that the spending pledges made by the Government were only made due to insecurities of them winning the next election (57% agreement). Furthermore 54% agreed that the measures announced in the Budget were more about popularity than improving the economy.
- Less than a third of voters felt the Budget was fair and balanced (32%), with just under half (47%) thinking it will benefit the wealthy more than ordinary Australians.



Agreement with Budget Statements

Q Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the Budget?

NET: Agree	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Liberal / National	Vote Greens	NET: Vote Other
The Government only made its spending pledges because they are in danger of losing the election	57%	77%	39%	65%	61%
This Budget is more about improving the Government's popularity than improving the economy	54%	75%	32%	71%	58%
Providing adequate funding disability services is more important than returning the Budget to surplus	53%	68%	40%	58%	51%
This Budget will benefit the wealthy more than ordinary Australians	47%	67%	26%	62%	52%
Overall, the Budget is fair and balanced	32%	18%	57%	14%	24%

- The majority of Coalition voters believe the Budget is fair and balanced (57%) compared to just 18% of Labor voters, 14% of Greens voters and 24% of those intending to vote for an independent candidate or other minor party.



Rating of Budget

Q In general, do you think the Budget has been good or bad for you personally?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Liberal / National	Vote Greens	NET: Vote Other
NET: Good	26%	16%	42%	19%	21%
NET: Bad	20%	30%	4%	27%	33%
Very good	5%	2%	9%	3%	4%
Good	21%	15%	33%	16%	17%
Neither good nor bad	46%	49%	50%	45%	39%
Bad	12%	16%	3%	19%	23%
Very bad	8%	13%	2%	8%	10%
Don't know	8%	5%	4%	9%	7%

- 26% of people believe they will personally benefit from the Budget, with 20% expecting to be worse off. 46% thought it would not affect them.
- Coalition voters were most likely to think the Budget was good for them (42%), with just 16% of Labor voters and 19% of Greens voters expecting the same outcome.

Rating of Budget

Q In general, do you think the Budget has been good or bad for you personally?

	Total	Aged 18-34	Aged 35-54	Aged 55+	Lower Household Income (Up to \$51,999 per year)	Mid Household Income (\$52,000-\$103,999 per year)	Higher Household Income (More than \$104,000 per year)
NET: Good	26%	29%	28%	20%	18%	27%	40%
NET: Bad	20%	16%	19%	23%	29%	16%	11%
Very good	5%	7%	4%	3%	5%	4%	6%
Good	21%	22%	24%	17%	12%	23%	34%
Neither good nor bad	46%	43%	43%	53%	46%	49%	45%
Bad	12%	10%	12%	13%	16%	10%	8%
Very bad	8%	5%	7%	10%	12%	6%	3%
Don't know	8%	12%	10%	4%	8%	8%	4%

- Just 18% of those with a household income of less than \$52,000 per year think the Budget was good for them, compared to 40% of those in a household earning over \$104,000 per year.
- 20% of those aged over 55 thought the Budget would be good for them personally, which was less than the 29% of those aged 18-34.



Budget impact on Voting Intention

Q To what extent has the Budget impacted your likelihood to vote for the Coalition at the upcoming Federal election?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Liberal / National	Vote Greens	NET: Vote Other
It has made me more likely to vote for them	17%	10%	31%	9%	14%
It has not changed my likelihood to vote or not vote for them	61%	52%	65%	64%	58%
It has made me less likely to vote for them	22%	38%	4%	27%	28%

- 61% said the Budget would have no effect on the way they intend to vote at the next election.
- The Budget has strengthened the vote within Coalition support, with 31% saying the Budget has made them more likely to vote for the Coalition.
- 38% of Labor voters are less likely to consider the Coalition as a result of the Budget, with 10% of Labor voters saying they are more likely to consider switching their vote.

Budget Spending Priorities

Q Which of the Liberal party, or the Labor party would you trust more to..?

	Liberal	Labor	Don't know	NET: Difference
Manage the economy in the interests of business	54%	19%	26%	+35
Deliver a Budget surplus	48%	22%	31%	+26
Manage the economy overall	44%	29%	27%	+15
Set the economy up for the long-term	43%	29%	28%	+14
Reduce taxes	37%	36%	27%	+1
Ensure the taxation system is fair	33%	38%	29%	-5
Make multinationals pay their fair share of tax	31%	38%	31%	-7
Fund basic services like schools and hospitals	32%	46%	22%	-14
Manage the economy in the interests of working people	31%	45%	25%	-14
Close tax loopholes for the wealthy	24%	46%	30%	-24

- The Coalition is seen as more trustworthy than Labor to manage the economy in the interests of businesses (54% trust the Coalition to do this, compared to 19% who trust Labor), deliver the Budget surplus (48% vs. 22%), manage the economy overall (44% vs. 29%) and set the economy up for the long-term (43% vs. 23%).
- Labor were seen as just as trustworthy as the Coalition to reduce taxes (36% vs. 37%).



Energy Price Initiatives

Q To what extent do you approve or disapprove of the following measures which have been suggested as ways to keep power prices down?

	NET: Strongly / Somewhat approve	NET: Strongly / Somewhat disapprove	Strongly approve	Somewhat approve	Somewhat disapprove	Strongly disapprove	Unsure
End power privatisation, keeping Snowy hydro and other assets in public ownership	74%	9%	43%	31%	7%	2%	17%
Help households to install battery storage and solar panels with \$2,000 and low cost finance	73%	14%	35%	37%	10%	5%	13%
Increase share of power generated from renewable energy to 50%	66%	16%	30%	35%	9%	7%	19%

- 74% approve of the proposal to end power privatisation in order to keep energy costs down. A similar proportion (73%) approve of providing financial help for households to install battery storage and 66% approve of increased renewable power.

Energy Price Initiatives

Q To what extent do you approve or disapprove of the following measures which have been suggested as ways to keep power prices down?

NET: Approve	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Liberal / National	Vote Greens	NET: Vote Other
End power privatisation, keeping Snowy hydro and other assets in public ownership	74%	81%	75%	72%	78%
Help households to install battery storage and solar panels with \$2,000 and low cost finance	73%	81%	70%	83%	72%
Increase share of power generated from renewable energy to 50%	66%	76%	61%	76%	60%

- Each of the proposals has majority support among voters of all of the major political parties.



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.