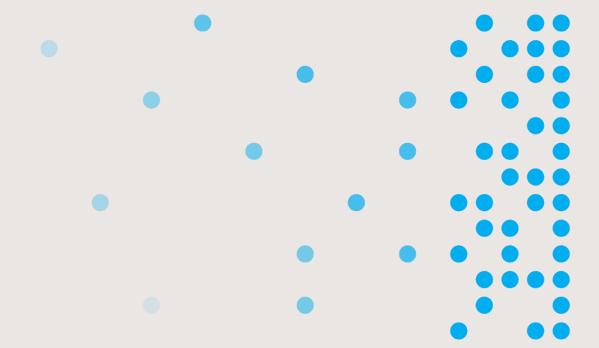# The Essential Report

15 October 2019

The Essential Report

Date: 15/10/2019

Prepared By: Essential Research

Data Supplied by:

qualtrics

AMSRS

Our researchers are members of the Australian Market and Social Research Society.

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About this poll

This report summarises the results of a fortnightly omnibus conducted by Essential Research with data provided by Qualtrics. The survey was conducted online from 10th October 2019 to 13th October 2019 and is based on 1,088 respondents.

This week's report includes questions about who makes the better Prime Minister, performance of Liberal government and Labor opposition in the six months since the election, the Liberal government's performance in certain policy areas, most important issues for the government to address in the coming 12 months, description of the Liberal and Labor parties (as well as their leaders) and the repatriation of Syrian brides.

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.

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Performance of Scott Morrison

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

	Oct'19	Sep'19	Aug'19	Jul'19	Jun'19	Mar'19
NET: Approve	**47%**	49%	48%	48%	48%	43%
NET: Disapprove	**38%**	36%	37%	34%	36%	39%
Don't know	**15%**	15%	16%	18%	18%	18%
Base (n)	**1,088**	1,093	1,096	1,091	1,099	1,090

	Total	Voting Intention			
		Labor	Coalition	Greens	NET: Other
Strongly approve	**12%**	4%	29%	3%	4%
Approve	**34%**	21%	55%	19%	32%
Disapprove	**19%**	29%	9%	26%	21%
Strongly disapprove	**19%**	32%	2%	36%	25%
Don't know	**15%**	14%	6%	16%	18%
NET: Approve	**47%**	25%	84%	22%	36%
NET: Disapprove	**38%**	61%	10%	62%	46%
Base (n)	**1,088**	343	380	107	130

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- There is little change to the approval rating of the Prime Minister this month, with the 47% of participants approving of the job he's doing is on par with previous months to June 2019 (49% in Oct'19 and 48% in June and July).

- The vast majority of Coalition voters approve of Morrison's performance as PM, with 84% approval, compared to just 10% of Coalition voters who disapprove.

- Males (53%), capital city residents (50%) and participants with a university education (52%) were also more likely to view the PM's performance positively – than females (40%), non-capital residents (40%) and those with lower levels of education (43%).

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Performance of Anthony Albanese

Q   Do you approve or disapprove of the job Anthony Albanese is doing as Opposition Leader?

	Oct'19	Sep'19	Aug'19	Jul'19	Jun'19	Mar'19 (Shorten)
NET: Approve	**40%**	36%	38%	39%	35%	38%
NET: Disapprove	**29%**	31%	29%	24%	25%	44%
Don't know	**31%**	33%	33%	37%	39%	18%
Base (n)	**1,088**	1,093	1,096	1,091	1,099	1,090

	Total	Voting Intention			
		Labor	Coalition	Greens	NET: Other
Strongly approve	**7%**	12%	5%	7%	2%
Approve	**33%**	44%	32%	34%	22%
Disapprove	**21%**	14%	26%	19%	29%
Strongly disapprove	**9%**	3%	15%	5%	13%
Don't know	**31%**	27%	23%	35%	33%
NET: Approve	**40%**	56%	37%	41%	24%
NET: Disapprove	**29%**	17%	41%	24%	42%
Base (n)	**1,088**	343	380	107	130

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- Anthony Albanese has 40% approval as Opposition Leader, but just under one third (31%) don't know how to rate his performance. More respondents are able to provide a rating on Albanese's performance now, than when he first took over the position in June, when 29% recorded a response of don't know .

- Approval with Albanese's performance is driven by high-income earners (48%), participants with a university education (47%) and males (44%).

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Preferred Prime Minister

Q   Who do you think would makes the better Prime Minister out of Scott Morrison and Anthony Albanese?

	Oct'19	Sep'19	Aug'19	Jul'19	Jun'19	May'19	Mar'19
Scott Morrison	**43%**	46%	44%	44%	43%	39%	44%
Anthony Albanese	**28%**	25%	28%	26%	25%	32% (Shorten)	31% (Shorten)
Don't know	**29%**	29%	28%	31%	32%	28%	26%
Base (n)	**1,088**	1,093	1,096	1,091	1,099	1,210	1,090

	Total	Gender		Age		
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+
Scott Morrison	**43%**	48%	39%	42%	40%	48%
Anthony Albanese	**28%**	30%	25%	29%	25%	29%
Don't know	**29%**	21%	36%	29%	35%	23%
Base (n)	**1,088**	539	549	342	373	373

- More than two-fifths of participants think that Scott Morrison makes the better PM (43%), which is on par with previous months from June 2019 (from 46% to 43%)

- 29% don't know who would make the better PM between Scott Morrison and Anthony Albanese.

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Performance of Coalition since May'19 election

Q In the six months since winning the election, how would you rate the performance of the Coalition Government as a whole?

	Total	Voting Intention			
		Labor	Coalition	Greens	NET: Other
Excellent	**7%**	3%	14%	3%	3%
Good	**26%**	13%	48%	13%	20%
Fair	**30%**	32%	31%	30%	30%
Poor	**28%**	45%	5%	46%	38%
Unsure	**9%**	6%	2%	8%	9%
Base (n)	**1,088**	343	380	107	130

- Although just 7% rated the performance of the Coalition as 'Excellent' in the 6 months since the election victory, 26% rated it 'Good' and a further 30% as 'Fair'.

- Men (10% to 4% of women) and Coalition voters (14% to 3% or all other voters) were more likely to rate the Coalition Government's performance as 'Excellent'.

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Performance of Labor since May'19 election

Q   And how would you rate the performance of the Labor opposition in the six months since the election?

	Total	Voting Intention			
		Labor	Coalition	Greens	NET: Other
Excellent	**5%**	8%	5%	7%	2%
Good	**19%**	30%	13%	22%	7%
Fair	**38%**	45%	38%	30%	36%
Poor	**26%**	10%	37%	30%	41%
Unsure	**13%**	8%	7%	11%	14%
Base (n)	**1,088**	343	380	107	130

-   Ratings for the performance of the Labor Opposition were broadly in line with the Government, with just 5% rating it as excellent and most rating it as 'Fair' (38%).

    Those aged 18-34 were most likely to rate the performance of Labor as 'Excellent' (9% to 3% of over 35 year olds).

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Attributes of the Liberal Party

Q   Here is a list of things both favourable and unfavourable that have been said about Federal political parties. Which statements do you feel fit the <u>Liberal Party</u>?

	Total	Change (Aug'18)	Aug'18 (Turnbull)	Nov'17 (Turnbull)
Will promise to do anything to win votes	**64%**	-4	68%	67%
Too close to the big corporate and financial interests	**63%**	-4	67%	65%
Out of touch with ordinary people	**60%**	-9	69%	66%
Moderate	**54%**	+6	48%	53%
Have a vision for the future	**51%**	+8	43%	48%
Divided	**50%**	-29	79%	68%
Understands the problems facing Australia	**49%**	+9	40%	41%
Clear about what they stand for	**48%**	+15	33%	40%
Have good policies	**48%**	+8	40%	45%
Has a good team of leaders	**46%**	+15	31%	37%
Looks after the interests of working people	**40%**	+8	32%	36%
Keeps its promises	**40%**	+12	28%	32%
Trustworthy	**39%**	+9	30%	34%
Extreme	**35%**	-5	40%	37%
Base (n)	**1,088**	-	1,035	1,025

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- The Liberal party is perceived as promising to do anything to win votes (64%), too close to the big corporate and financial interests (63%) and out of touch with ordinary people (60%).

- Since August 2018, there have been improved perceptions that the Liberal Party has a good team of leaders (up 15pts, from 31%), are clear about what they stand for (up 15pts, from 33%) and keeps its promises (up 12pts, from 28%).

- Over the same time they are also perceived less as divided (down 29pts, from 79%) and being out of touch with ordinary people (down 9pts, from 69%).

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Attributes of the Labor Party

Q   And which statements do you feel fit the Labor Party?

	Total	Change (Aug'18)	Aug'18 (Shorten)	Nov'17 (Shorten)
Will promise to do anything to win votes	65%	-5	70%	69%
Looks after the interests of working people	59%	+4	55%	58%
Divided	55%	+9	46%	51%
Moderate	53%	+3	50%	52%
Understands the problems facing Australia	51%	+3	48%	48%
Out of touch with ordinary people	51%	-	51%	52%
Have a vision for the future	50%	+2	48%	49%
Clear about what they stand for	46%	-1	47%	45%
Have good policies	44%	+1	43%	44%
Has a good team of leaders	42%	+3	39%	39%
Too close to the big corporate and financial interests	41%	+5	36%	42%
Extreme	36%	-	36%	41%
Trustworthy	36%	+2	34%	32%
Keeps its promises	35%	+5	30%	31%
Base (n)	1,088	-	1,035	1,025

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- The Labor party is similarly perceived as promising to do anything to win votes (65%) but also looking after the interests of working people (59%) and divided (55%).

- The perception that Labor is divided has increased since August 2018 by 9pts.

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Party Attributes Comparison – Labor vs Liberal

Q   Here is a list of things both favourable and unfavourable that have been said about Federal political parties. Which statements do you feel fit the Liberal Party / Labor Party?

	Liberal	Labor	Difference
Will promise to do anything to win votes	64%	65%	**-1**
Too close to the big corporate and financial interests	63%	41%	**+22**
Out of touch with ordinary people	60%	51%	**+9**
Moderate	54%	53%	**+1**
Have a vision for the future	51%	50%	**+1**
Divided	50%	55%	**-5**
Understands the problems facing Australia	49%	51%	**-2**
Clear about what they stand for	48%	46%	**+2**
Have good policies	48%	44%	**+4**
Has a good team of leaders	46%	42%	**+4**
Looks after the interests of working people	40%	59%	**-19**
Keeps its promises	40%	35%	**+5**
Trustworthy	39%	36%	**+2**
Extreme	35%	36%	**-1**

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- Though Liberal and Labour are similarly seen to promise to do anything to win votes (-1pt difference), the Liberal party has a stronger image as being too close to the big corporate and financial interests (22pt difference) and out of touch with ordinary people (9pt difference), whereas more people think the Labor party looks after the interests of working people (19pt difference)

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Leader attributes – Scott Morrison

Q   Which of the following describe your opinion of the Prime Minister, Scott Morrison?

	Total	Change (Dec'18)	Dec'18 (Morrison)	Sep'18 (Morrison)
Intelligent	**64%**	+3	61%	66%
Hard-working	**63%**	+3	60%	60%
Out of touch with ordinary people	**56%**	+2	54%	51%
A capable leader	**54%**	+5	49%	54%
Good in a crisis	**51%**	+10	41%	44%
Understands the problems facing Australia	**50%**	+4	46%	51%
Superficial	**48%**	+3	45%	43%
Narrow-minded	**47%**	+1	46%	41%
Arrogant	**44%**	+1	43%	38%
More honest than most politicians	**44%**	+5	39%	38%
Trustworthy	**43%**	+4	39%	41%
Visionary	**42%**	+4	38%	39%
Intolerant	**41%**	+4	37%	36%
Aggressive	**37%**	+3	34%	34%
Erratic	**34%**	-2	36%	29%
Base (n)	**1,088**	-	1,026	1,050

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- The attributes mainly associated with Scott Morrison are intelligent (64%) and hard-working (63%) – the same as in December 2018.

- Since last year, Scott Morrison is more likely to be seen to be good in a crisis (increase 10pts from 41% to 51%).

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Leader attributes – Anthony Albanese

Q   Which of the following describe your opinion of the Opposition Leader, <u>Anthony Albanese</u>?

	Total	Change (Dec'18)	Dec'18 (Shorten)	Sep'18 (Shorten)
Intelligent	**66%**	+10	56%	55%
Hard-working	**64%**	+7	57%	58%
Understands the problems facing Australia	**53%**	+8	45%	48%
A capable leader	**51%**	+8	43%	43%
Out of touch with ordinary people	**44%**	-6	50%	50%
More honest than most politicians	**42%**	+11	31%	29%
Visionary	**41%**	+9	32%	34%
Trustworthy	**41%**	+7	34%	33%
Good in a crisis	**40%**	+4	36%	39%
Superficial	**39%**	-8	47%	50%
Narrow-minded	**37%**	-7	44%	44%
Arrogant	**33%**	-13	46%	50%
Erratic	**30%**	-10	40%	41%
Intolerant	**30%**	-9	39%	39%
Aggressive	**27%**	-10	37%	38%
Base (n)	**1,088**	-	1,026	1,050

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- Anthony Albanese is also perceived as intelligent (66%) and hard-working (64%), but this perception is greater than Bill Shorten in December 2018 (56% and 57% respectively). Albanese also is more likely than Bill Shorten to be seen as more honest than most (42% to 32%).

- Albanese is seen as less arrogant than Shorten (33% to 46%), less erratic (30% to 40%) and less aggressive (27% to 37%).

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Leader attributes – Comparisons

Q   Which of the following describe your opinion of the Prime Minister, <u>Scott Morrison</u> / Opposition Leader, <u>Anthony Albanese</u>?

	Scott Morrison	Anthony Albanese	Difference
Intelligent	64%	66%	+2
Hard-working	63%	64%	-1
Out of touch with ordinary people	56%	44%	+8
A capable leader	54%	51%	+3
Good in a crisis	51%	40%	+11
Understands the problems facing Australia	50%	53%	-3
Superficial	48%	39%	+9
Narrow-minded	47%	37%	+10
Arrogant	44%	33%	+11
More honest than most politicians	44%	42%	+2
Trustworthy	43%	41%	+2
Visionary	42%	41%	+1
Intolerant	41%	30%	+9
Aggressive	37%	27%	+10
Erratic	34%	30%	+4

-   For all opinions, more people felt it described Scott Morrison than Anthony Albanese.

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- Compared to Anthony Albanese, Scott Morrison is seen as similarly intelligent (2pt difference) and hard-working (1pt difference) but Morrison has higher recognition of being good in a crisis (+11pt difference), arrogant (+11pt difference), narrow-minded (+10pt difference) and aggressive (+10pt difference).

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Most Important Issues

Q Which of the following issues are the most important for the Federal Government to address over the next 12 months?

	Total	Change (Feb'19)	Feb'19
Create jobs and reduce unemployment	36%	+8	28%
Improve the health system	32%	+1	31%
Reduce utilities bills	27%	-4	31%
Protection of the environment	27%	+11	16%
Improve wages and working conditions	24%	+2	22%
Increase housing affordability	19%	-6	25%
Limit the amount of migration to Australia	19%	-5	24%
Promote renewable energy	19%	+4	15%
Crack-down on tax avoidance by big companies	16%	-6	22%
Provide tax cuts	15%	+3	12%
Ensure the security of energy supply	13%	+2	11%
Maintain strong border protection	12%	-2	14%
Provide more money for education	11%	-3	14%
Combat domestic crime	10%	-1	11%
Combat international crime and terrorism	8%	+2	6%
Increase the budget surplus	6%	-	-
Improve conditions for refugees and asylum seekers	6%	-	6%
Base (n)	1,088	-	1,085

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- The most important issues for the Federal Government to address over the next 12 months are seen to be creating jobs and reducing unemployment (36%), improving the health system (32%), reducing utility bills and protecting the environment (both 27%).

- Protecting the environment saw an 11pt increase as an important issue for the Federal Government to address from February 2019 (from 16% to 27%).

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Syrian brides

Q In Syria, 20 Australian women and 46 children are being held by the Syrian Democratic Forces alongside their husbands who were captured while fighting for the Islamic State. These women and children are not considered prisoners of war but are unable to leave the camp and return to Australia.

It's a complex situation where national security issues, human rights violations and the law all intersect.

Broadly, to what extent do you support or oppose these women and children returning to Australia?

	Total	Gender		Age		
	Total	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+
Strongly support	17%	15%	19%	29%	13%	10%
Somewhat support	22%	22%	22%	23%	26%	17%
Somewhat oppose	24%	30%	19%	10%	23%	37%
Strongly oppose	23%	21%	25%	23%	21%	26%
Don't know	14%	12%	15%	15%	16%	10%
NET: Support	39%	37%	41%	52%	40%	27%
NET: Oppose	47%	51%	44%	34%	44%	62%
Base (n)	1,088	539	549	342	373	373

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	Total	Voting Intention			
		Labor	Coalition	Greens	NET: Other
Strongly support	**17%**	18%	15%	29%	10%
Somewhat support	**22%**	26%	19%	28%	19%
Somewhat oppose	**24%**	20%	31%	10%	41%
Strongly oppose	**23%**	23%	28%	17%	20%
Don't know	**14%**	13%	8%	16%	10%
NET: Support	**39%**	45%	33%	57%	29%
NET: Oppose	**47%**	42%	59%	27%	61%
Base (n)	**1,088**	343	380	107	130

- Almost half (47%) of participants are opposed to the Syrian brides and children being returned to Australia – this is driven by those over 55 (62% opposed), those with professional qualifications (53%), non-capital residents (53%), Liberal voters (59%) and independent/other voters (61%).

- Greens voters (57%), 18-34 year olds (52%) and university educated participants (49%) are most supportive of the families returning home.

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Appendix: Household income definitions*

NET: Lower Income	Up to $51,999 per year Total of all wages/salaries, government benefits, pensions, allowances and other income that your household usually receives (GROSS – before tax and superannuation deductions)
NET: Mid Income	$52,000 to $103,999 per year Total of all wages/salaries, government benefits, pensions, allowances and other income that your household usually receives (GROSS – before tax and superannuation deductions)
NET: High Income	More than $104,000 per year Total of all wages/salaries, government benefits, pensions, allowances and other income that your household usually receives (GROSS – before tax and superannuation deductions)

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 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.

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