



## Essential Report

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With data supplied by



## Executive Summary

This short report summarises the results of a weekly omnibus conducted by Essential Research with data provided by Your Source. The omnibus was conducted online from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> of August and attracted 1014 responses.

Aside from the standard questions we ask each week on voting behaviour, this week we asked questions related to determinants in voting behaviour, people's general economic concerns and their perception of economic conditions in Australia.

This week we also asked the Australian public whether they believe that when the Reserve Bank lowers the official interest rate, banks should be required by law to cut their mortgage rates by the same margin. We also asked a question around the 2008 Beijing Olympics and the advancement of human rights in China.

The methodology used to carry out this research is available in appendix one (page 10).

Please note not all tables total 100% due to rounding.



## Summary of Results

### Federal politics – voting behaviour

Sample of 1717\*

<b>2 week average</b>		<b>2PP</b>	<b>2PP shift from last week</b>
Liberal	33%		
National	3%		
<b>Total Lib/Nat</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>42%</b>	-
<b>Labor</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>58%</b>	-
Greens	10%		
Family First	4%		
Other/Independent	5%		

There has been no shift in the 2PP average over the past three weeks.

NB. The data in the above table is derived from our weekly first preference voting question. Respondents who select 'don't know' as their first preference are not included in the results.

\* Sample is the culmination of the past two weeks' data.



Social issues and voting behaviour

Q. From the following list, which three are likely to be the most important issues that will decide how you vote at a Federal election?

	Three most important this week n=1014	Three most important 14 <sup>th</sup> of Jan n=1004
Healthcare	39%	45%
Management of the economy	36%	32%
Petrol prices	31%	*
Interest rates	26%	25%
Taxation	22%	18%
Education	22%	26%
Australian jobs and the protection of local industries	21%	15%
The environment	21%	17%
Housing affordability	19%	19%
Climate change	18%	17%
Water	17%	12%
Political leadership	14%	31%
Industrial relations laws	9%	23%
Security and the war on terrorism	6%	6%
Other	*	4%

Day to day issues such as healthcare (39%), management of the economy (36%) and petrol prices (31%) rate as the three most important issues for the Australian public. Other 'bread and butter' type issues such as interest rates (26%), taxation (22%), education (22%) and Australian jobs and the protection of local industries (21%) also rate highly as issues of importance for Australian's.

Issues that have dropped most significantly over the past six months include political leadership (-17%) and industrial relations laws (-14%).



## Social issues and voting behaviour

Q. And of those three, what do you think is likely to be the single most important issue that will decide how you vote at a Federal election?

	Single most important this week n=1014	Single most important 14 <sup>th</sup> of Jan n=1004
Management of the economy	20%	17%
Healthcare	14%	16%
Interest rates	10%	8%
Australian jobs and the protection of local industries	8%	6%
Petrol prices	8%	*
Housing affordability	7%	5%
Climate change	6%	5%
The environment	6%	5%
Political leadership	6%	15%
Water	5%	4%
Taxation	4%	4%
Education	4%	5%
Industrial relations laws	2%	6%
Security and the war on terrorism	1%	1%
Other	*	3%

The single most important issue for most people continues to be management of the economy (20%), with health care (14%) and interest rates (10%) rating highly. Apart from Healthcare, economic issues tend to be rated most highly – and most increasing slightly since the January poll.

Political leadership has dropped quite significantly off the Australian public's radar, dropping by 9 percentage points since we asked the question in the middle of January this year. Industrial relations has also dropped as an issue of importance since earlier this year (-4%), this is probably because people perceive that the election of the Rudd Labor Government means that the issue has been dealt with.



## Economic concerns of Australian's

Q. Which of the following do you think are the three main economic concerns facing Australia today? And of those, which one do you think is the main economic concern?

	Three main economic concerns	Main economic concern	< \$31.2K 3 main concerns	\$31.2K - \$52K 3 main concerns	\$52K – \$83.19 3 main concerns	\$83.2K > 3 main concerns
Petrol and energy prices	64%	18%	65%	70%	65%	59%
Food and inflation generally	60%	26%	62%	63%	58%	58%
Interest rates	48%	19%	32%	43%	52%	56%
Affordable housing	33%	9%	34%	27%	35%	35%
Jobs going overseas	21%	7%	31%	22%	19%	16%
Taxes	14%	3%	13%	13%	13%	17%
Superannuation losses	13%	3%	12%	9%	12%	17%
Low wages	11%	3%	13%	19%	7%	7%
Stock market crash	10%	4%	8%	6%	10%	14%
Too much Government spending	7%	2%	8%	4%	7%	6%
Not enough Government spending	6%	2%	9%	5%	4%	6%
Poor management of large corporations/dropping profits	6%	2%	5%	6%	8%	4%
Unemployment	6%	2%	5%	8%	6%	3%
Big budget surplus	3%	1%	3%	4%	3%	2%

The three main economic concerns for most people are petrol and energy prices (64%), food and inflation generally (60%) and interest rates (48%) reflecting an over-riding concern for rising prices and general costs of living. Our results indicate that the Australian public wants interest rates lowered and cost of living to come under control – with concerns such as unemployment rating significantly lower than others.

Those in higher income brackets (>\$83.2K) were more likely to be concerned about interest rates (56%), while those in lower to middle income brackets (\$31.2K - \$52K) were more likely to be concerned about petrol and energy prices (70%) and low wages (19%).



Economic conditions in Australia

Q. Right now do you think that economic conditions in this country as a whole are getting better, getting worse or are they the same?

	% This week	7 <sup>th</sup> of July 2008 N=1014
Getting better	9%	8%
Getting worse	61%	62%
The same	24%	26%
Don't know	6%	4%
Total	100%	100%

This is largely unchanged from the results of the poll conducted a month ago. However, since this question was first asked in early January, the percentage saying 'getting better' has decreased, while at the same time, the percentage of people believing conditions are 'getting worse' has increased steadily.



Interest rates and the Reserve Bank

Q. Thinking about interest rates, do you think that when the Reserve Bank lowers the official interest rate, the banks should be required by law to cut their mortgage rates by the same margin?

	%
Yes	82%
No	10%
Don't know	8%
Total	100%

A significant number of those polled (82%) believe that when the Reserve Bank lowers the official interest rate, banks should be required by law to cut their mortgage rates by the same margin.

This suggests that the public would support Government intervention that would regulate the industry and protect the general public against rate rises by the banks.



2008 Beijing Olympics and human rights

Q. Thinking about the Beijing Olympics – from what you have read and heard, do you think that holding the Olympics in China will advance the human rights and freedom of the Chinese people?

	%
Yes	12%
No	66%
Don't know	22%
Total	100%

Most people (66%) believe that holding the Olympics in China will not advance the human rights and freedoms of the Chinese people.



## Appendix One – Methodology

The data gathered for this report is gathered from a weekly online omnibus conducted by Your Source. Your Source is an Australian social and market research company specializing in recruitment, field research, data gathering and data analysis. 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. Senior Your Source staff hold Australian Market and Social Research Society (AMSRS) membership and are bound by professional codes of behavior.

Essential Research has been utilizing the Your Source online panel to conduct research on a week by week basis since the 19<sup>th</sup> of November 2007. Each Monday, the team at Essential Media Communications discusses issues that are topical. From there a series of questions are devised to put to the Australian public. Some questions are repeated each week (such as political preference and social perspective), while others are unique to each week and reflect prominent media and social issues that are present at the time.

Your Source has a self managed consumer online panel of 109 500. 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 + responses. The Your Source online omnibus is live from the Wednesday of each week and closed on the following Tuesday. Incentives are offered to participants in the form of points (referred to as 'Zoints').

EMC 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.

