

The Essential Report

27 May 2014





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Prepared by: Essential Research

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Essential Media Communications is a member of
the Association of Market and Social Research Organisations.



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 Your Source. The survey was conducted online from the 22th to 26th May 2014 and is based on 1,058 respondents.

Aside from the standard question on voting intention, this week's report includes questions on party leaders, the GST, influence of groups on political parties, the Trans-Pacific Partnership, resettling refugees in Cambodia and the school chaplaincy program.

The methodology used to carry out this research is described in the appendix on page 14.

Note that due to rounding, not all tables necessarily total 100% and subtotals may also vary.

Federal politics – 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?

Q. If don't know -Well which party are you currently leaning to?

Sample size = 1,895 respondents

First preference/leaning to	Election 7 Sep 13	4 weeks ago 29/4/14	2 weeks ago 13/05/14	Last week 20/5/14	This week 27/05/14
Liberal		38%	38%	38%	37%
National		2%	3%	3%	3%
Total Lib/Nat	45.6%	40%	40%	40%	40%
Labor	33.4%	38%	39%	40%	39%
Greens	8.6%	10%	9%	8%	9%
Palmer United Party	5.5%	5%	5%	5%	5%
Other/Independent	6.9%	6%	8%	7%	7%

2 Party Preferred	Election 7 Sep 13	4 weeks ago 29/4/14	2 weeks ago 13/05/14	Last week 20/5/14	This week 27/05/14
Liberal National	53.5%	48%	48%	48%	48%
Labor	46.5%	52%	52%	52%	52%

NB. The data in the above tables comprise 2-week averages derived from the first preference/leaning to voting questions. 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 2013 election.

Leader Attributes – Tony Abbott

Q. Which of the following describe your opinion of the Prime Minister, Tony Abbott?

	2 Sep 14 (as Opposition leader)	29 Oct 14	15 Apr	Total 27 May	Change
Out of touch with ordinary people	52%	51%	56%	67%	+11
Arrogant	52%	54%	58%	63%	+5
Narrow-minded	55%	54%	56%	61%	+5
Hard working	71%	67%	66%	57%	-9
Superficial	48%	49%	50%	57%	+7
Intolerant	47%	49%	47%	55%	+8
Intelligent	63%	62%	59%	52%	-7
Aggressive	47%	46%	45%	52%	+7
Erratic	43%	43%	43%	51%	+8
Understands the problems facing Australia	46%	51%	48%	42%	-5
A capable leader	46%	52%	50%	41%	-9
Good in a crisis	39%	45%	45%	35%	-10
Visionary	35%	33%	34%	31%	-3
More honest than most politicians	34%	39%	37%	30%	-7
Trustworthy	38%	40%	40%	29%	-11

Tony Abbott's key attributes were out of touch with ordinary people (67%), arrogant (63%), narrow-minded (61%), hard working (57%) and superficial (57%).

Since April, the largest shifts have been for out of touch with ordinary people (+11), trustworthy (-11), good in a crisis (-10), hard working (-9) and a capable leader (-9).

Leader Attributes – Bill Shorten

Q. Which of the following describe your opinion of the Opposition Leader, Bill Shorten?

	29 Oct 14	15 Apr	Total 27 May	Change
Intelligent	69%	63%	66%	+3
Hard working	65%	60%	66%	+6
Understands the problems facing Australia	50%	44%	53%	+9
A capable leader	49%	42%	51%	+9
Superficial	37%	43%	42%	-1
Good in a crisis	40%	36%	40%	+4
Out of touch with ordinary people	42%	44%	39%	-5
Trustworthy	34%	32%	36%	+4
Arrogant	35%	40%	36%	-4
Narrow-minded	31%	39%	35%	-4
More honest than most politicians	27%	26%	32%	+6
Erratic	30%	37%	32%	-5
Aggressive	31%	31%	32%	+1
Visionary	33%	28%	30%	+2
Intolerant	30%	32%	29%	-3

Bill Shorten's key attributes were intelligent (66%), hard working (66%), understands the problems facing Australia (53%) and a capable leader (51%).

Since April, the largest shifts have been for a capable leader (+9), understands the problems facing Australia (+9), hard working (+6) and more honest than most politicians (+6).

Leader Attributes – Comparisons

	Abbott	Shorten	Difference
Out of touch with ordinary people	67%	39%	+28
Arrogant	63%	36%	+27
Narrow-minded	61%	35%	+26
Intolerant	55%	29%	+26
Aggressive	52%	32%	+20
Erratic	51%	32%	+19
Superficial	57%	42%	+15
Visionary	31%	30%	+1
More honest than most politicians	30%	32%	-2
Good in a crisis	35%	40%	-5
Trustworthy	29%	36%	-7
Hard-working	57%	66%	-9
Understands the problems facing Australia	42%	53%	-9
A capable leader	41%	51%	-10
Intelligent	52%	66%	-14

Compared to Bill Shorten, Tony Abbott is much more likely to be considered out of touch with ordinary people (+28), arrogant (+27), narrow minded (+26), intolerant (+26) and aggressive (+20).

Bill Shorten is regarded by more respondents to be intelligent (-14) and a capable leader (-10).

Changes to GST

Q. Do you support or oppose the following changes to the GST to cover cuts to funding commitments to the states for schools and hospitals announced in the recent Federal Budget?

Raising the GST to 12% for all items currently covered	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other
Total support	32%	25%	45%	24%	23%
Total oppose	58%	70%	46%	63%	51%
Strongly support	9%	6%	16%	5%	9%
Support	23%	19%	29%	19%	14%
Oppose	19%	17%	21%	14%	20%
Strongly oppose	39%	53%	25%	49%	31%
Don't know	9%	5%	10%	13%	12%
Expanding the GST to cover fresh fruit and vegetables	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other
Total support	18%	12%	27%	11%	21%
Total oppose	75%	83%	65%	83%	73%
Strongly support	5%	4%	9%	-	8%
Support	13%	8%	18%	11%	13%
Oppose	21%	16%	27%	16%	20%
Strongly oppose	54%	67%	38%	67%	53%
Don't know	7%	4%	9%	6%	6%

There was majority opposition to both raising the GST to 12% (58%) and expanding the GST to cover fresh fruit and vegetables (75%).

While there was strong majority opposition to expanding the GST across all voter groups, Liberal/National voters were split over raising the GST to 12% (45% support/46% oppose).

Influence of groups on Liberal/National politicians

Q. When making decisions about funding and policies, do you think that Liberal/National Coalition politicians listen to the following groups too much, not enough or just the right amount?

	Too much	Not enough	Just the right amount
Property Developers	53%	18%	30%
Mining Companies	52%	20%	27%
The Media	44%	24%	31%
Celebrities	41%	17%	42%
Religious Organisations	38%	27%	35%
Foreign Leaders	32%	29%	40%
Member based lobby groups (like GetUp!)	26%	39%	35%
Employer Groups	26%	44%	30%
Public Servants	25%	44%	30%
Unions	23%	45%	32%
Environmental Groups	21%	52%	27%
Active citizens on social media	15%	51%	35%
Students	12%	64%	25%
Welfare Groups	10%	66%	24%
Average Citizens	3%	79%	18%

Respondents tended to think that Coalition politicians listen too much to property developers, mining companies, the media, celebrities and religious organisations.

A majority thought they did not listen enough to average citizens, welfare groups, students, active citizens on social media, and environmental groups.

Influence of groups on Labor politicians

Q. When making decisions about funding and policies, do you think that Labor politicians listen to the following groups too much, not enough or just the right amount?

	Too much	Not enough	Just the right amount
Unions	47%	24%	29%
The Media	46%	18%	35%
Celebrities	40%	13%	47%
Property Developers	39%	21%	40%
Mining Companies	37%	29%	34%
Environmental Groups	33%	35%	32%
Member based lobby groups (like GetUp!)	32%	28%	40%
Religious Organisations	32%	26%	42%
Public Servants	32%	31%	37%
Foreign Leaders	31%	24%	44%
Active citizens on social media	25%	36%	39%
Students	23%	45%	32%
Welfare Groups	21%	44%	35%
Employer Groups	19%	45%	36%
Average Citizens	8%	64%	28%

Respondents tended to think that Labor politicians listen too much to unions, the media, celebrities and property developers.

They thought they did not listen enough to average citizens, employer groups, welfare groups and students.

Trans-Pacific Partnership

Q. The Australian Government is currently negotiating the Trans-Pacific Partnership, a regional trade agreement involving SE-Asian nations, South American nations, the US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand. This is largely being conducted behind closed doors, to allow government negotiators to have open and frank conversations and compromise on elements of the deal. Some commentators have expressed concern at the fact that no media or public are allowed to be part of this process, and the content of the deal is being kept secret.

Are you concerned or not concerned that these negotiations are closed to the public and the media?

Raising the GST to 12% for all items currently covered	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other
Very concerned	23%	34%	11%	33%	30%
Somewhat concerned	28%	32%	24%	37%	27%
Not really concerned	26%	21%	33%	18%	23%
Not at all concerned	11%	5%	23%	3%	3%
Don't know	11%	8%	9%	9%	18%

51% said they were very or somewhat concerned that Trans-Pacific Partnership negotiations are closed to the public and the media - 37% were not concerned.

Those most concerned were Greens voters (70%) and Labor voters (66%). Those least concerned were Liberal/National voters (56%) and incomes over \$1,600 pw (47%).

Resettling refugees in Cambodia

Q. Would you support or oppose an agreement with Cambodia to resettle refugees arriving in Australia by boat?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other
Total support	37%	31%	46%	23%	46%
Total oppose	39%	47%	33%	49%	35%
Strongly support	11%	9%	16%	5%	14%
Support	26%	22%	30%	18%	32%
Oppose	18%	23%	17%	19%	13%
Strongly oppose	21%	24%	16%	30%	22%
Don't know	24%	22%	21%	28%	18%

37% support an agreement with Cambodia to resettle refugees arriving in Australia by boat and 39% oppose.

49% of Greens voters and 47% of Labor voters oppose while 46% of Liberal/National voters support. There were no major differences across demographic groups.

School chaplaincy program

Q. In the most recent budget, The Federal Government announced that it would be continuing the funding of the school chaplaincy program at a cost for \$245 million.

Which schools program do you think is more appropriate for the Federal Government to fund?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Vote other
Religious chaplains only	5%	3%	9%	-	6%
Secular social workers only	17%	21%	10%	41%	11%
Both chaplains and social workers	37%	35%	41%	32%	44%
None of the above	23%	23%	22%	21%	23%
Don't know	18%	17%	18%	6%	15%

The most preferred option was for the Government to fund both chaplains and social workers (37%).

Only 5% supported the Government's policy of funding only religious chaplains.

Greens voters were more likely to prefer secular social workers only (41%) while 41% of Liberal/National voters preferred both chaplains and social workers.

Appendix: Methodology, margin of error and professional standards

The data gathered for this report is gathered from a weekly online omnibus conducted by Your Source. Essential Research has been utilizing the Your Source online panel to conduct research on a week-by-week basis since November 2007.

Each week, the team at Essential Media Communications discusses 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 media and social issues that are present at the time.

Your Source has a self-managed consumer online panel of over 100,000 members. 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 panellist 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+ 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 2010 election, the Essential Report estimates of first preference votes were all within 1% of the election results.

The Your Source online omnibus is live from the Wednesday night of each week and closed on the following Sunday. Incentives are offered to participants in the form of points. 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 and senior Your Source staff hold Australian Market and Social Research Society (AMSRS) membership and are bound by professional codes of behaviour. Your Source is an Australian social and market research company specializing in recruitment, field research, data gathering and data analysis. Essential Research is a member of the Association Market and Social Research Organisations (AMSRO). 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. Both Essential Research and Your Source are ISO accredited market research companies. This research was conducted in compliance with AS: ISO20252 guidelines.