

The Essential Report

01 March 2021



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Date: 01/03/2021

Prepared By: Essential Research

Data Supplied by:



Our researchers are members of the Research Society.

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 24th February to 1st March 2021 and is based on 1,074 respondents.

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 government response to Covid-19

Q Overall, how would you rate the **federal government's** response to the Covid-19 outbreak?

	01/03	15/02	01/02	30/11	16/11	02/11	05/10	21/09	07/09	24/08	10/08	27/07
Very poor	6%	5%	4%	6%	5%	5%	5%	5%	8%	6%	7%	6%
Quite poor	8%	7%	11%	8%	9%	10%	12%	13%	12%	11%	8%	11%
Neither good nor poor	24%	19%	19%	19%	18%	24%	22%	21%	22%	22%	21%	20%
Quite good	39%	42%	42%	41%	41%	39%	39%	40%	40%	40%	40%	40%
Very good	23%	27%	25%	26%	26%	22%	21%	21%	18%	22%	24%	24%
TOTAL: Poor	14%	12%	14%	13%	15%	15%	18%	18%	19%	17%	16%	16%
TOTAL: Good	62%	69%	67%	67%	67%	61%	60%	61%	59%	61%	63%	64%
Base (n)	1,074	1,109	1,092	1,034	1,010	1,063	1,066	1,081	1,076	1,068	1,010	1,058

- Rating of the federal government's handling of Covid-19 has fallen to 62% since last month, the lowest rating we've seen since November last year.



State government response to Covid-19

Q How would you rate your **state government's** response to the Covid-19 outbreak?

TOTAL: Good	01/03	15/02	01/02	30/11	16/11	02/11	05/10	21/09	07/09	24/08	10/08	27/07
NSW	72%	72%	71%	76%	75%	68%	65%	67%	57%	59%	61%	62%
VIC	49%	59%	61%	60%	59%	55%	45%	47%	50%	47%	49%	53%
QLD	73%	76%	78%	72%	71%	69%	69%	68%	66%	73%	68%	67%
SA	78%	79%	80%	70%	76%	77%	81%	81%	74%	65%	72%	76%
WA	85%	88%	80%	83%	82%	81%	83%	84%	87%	84%	86%	82%

- The rating of the VIC government has dropped further down to 49% (from 59% mid last month). This is the lowest rating since October last year.
- Positive rating of the QLD and WA governments has decreased slightly to 73% and 85% respectively (from 76% and 88% mid last month).
- Rating of the NSW and SA governments remain virtually unchanged at 72% and 78% respectively.



Uptake of a Covid-19 vaccine

Q The Covid-19 vaccine rollout has begun in Australia.

Once a vaccine becomes available to you, how long would you wait before taking it?

	01/03	18/01	14/12	10/08
I'd get vaccinated as soon as possible / I've already been vaccinated	50%	42%	43%	56%
I'd get vaccinated, but wouldn't do it straight away	40%	47%	46%	35%
I'd never get vaccinated	10%	11%	10%	8%
Base (n)	1,074	1,084	1,071	1,010

- With the launch of the Covid-19 vaccine nationwide rollout last week, about half (50%) now say they would get vaccinated as soon as possible – a noticeable rise from the 42% in January. Correspondingly, fewer people now say that would get vaccinated but not straight away (40% to 47% in January).
- 1 in 10 say that would never get vaccinated, consistent with levels seen in the last few months.



Uptake of a Covid-19 vaccine

Q The Covid-19 vaccine rollout has begun in Australia.

Once a vaccine becomes available to you, how long would you wait before taking it?

	Total	Gender		Age Group			Federal Voting Intention			
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Labor	TOTAL: Coalition	Greens	TOTAL: Other
I'd get vaccinated as soon as possible / I've already been vaccinated	50%	58%	42%	41%	44%	63%	50%	56%	58%	45%
I'd get vaccinated, but wouldn't do it straight away	40%	34%	46%	47%	43%	31%	41%	38%	33%	37%
I'd never get vaccinated	10%	7%	12%	11%	13%	6%	10%	6%	8%	18%
Base (n)	1,074	527	547	326	363	385	335	396	106	138

- Those most likely to get the vaccine immediately include men (58%) and those aged over 55 (63%).
- Those voting for independent or minor parties are the most likely to say they would never get vaccinated (18%).



Confidence in Covid-19 vaccine rollout

Q As vaccinations against Covid-19 are rolled out across Australia, how confident are you in each of the following?

That the rollout of vaccinations against Covid-19 in Australia will be...

TOTAL: Confident	01/03	01/02
... done efficiently	68%	68%
... done safely	73%	72%
... effective at stopping Covid-19 within the country	64%	58%
Base (n)	1,074	1,092

- With the Covid-19 vaccine rollout underway, more people are now confident it will be effective at stopping Covid-19 within the country (64% to 58% last month).
- Most people are also confident the rollout will be done efficiently (68%) and that it will be done safely (73%), consistent with levels last month.



Confidence in Covid-19 vaccine rollout

Q As vaccinations against Covid-19 are rolled out across Australia, how confident are you in each of the following?

TOTAL: Confident	Total	Gender		Age Group			Federal Voting Intention			
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Labor	TOTAL: Coalition	Greens	TOTAL: Other
... done efficiently	68%	74%	61%	67%	64%	73%	66%	78%	66%	58%
... done safely	73%	80%	67%	71%	69%	80%	70%	84%	78%	61%
... effective at stopping Covid-19 within the country	64%	72%	57%	63%	61%	69%	64%	75%	65%	52%
Base (n)	1,074	527	547	326	363	385	335	396	106	138

- While confidence in the Covid-19 rollout is relatively high across all demographics, those who are older are more confident than younger cohorts. For example, 80% of those over 55 are confident it will be done safely, compared to 69% those aged 35-54 and 71% of those 18-34. This trend is also reflected in confidence in the rollout’s efficiency and effectiveness.
- Out of all voters, Coalition voters are the most confident that the vaccine rollout will be done safely, with 84% who are confident and of this, over a third (33%) who are very confident.



Leader attributes – Scott Morrison

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

	Total	Change from May'20	May'20	Jan'20	Oct'19	Dec'18
Good in a crisis	59%	-7%	66%	32%	51%	41%
Trustworthy	52%	-4%	56%	40%	43%	39%
More honest than most politicians	50%	-1%	51%	39%	44%	39%
Visionary	41%	-7%	48%	30%	42%	38%
Out of touch with ordinary people	56%	+9%	47%	62%	56%	54%
Avoids responsibility	49%	-	-	-	-	-
In control of their team	56%	-	-	-	-	-
Base (n)	1,074	-	1,059	1,081	1,088	1,026

- Over half (56%) now think Scott Morrison is out of touch with ordinary people. This is up 9 percentage points since May'20 (47%).
- Fewer Australians think the Prime Minister is good in a crisis (down 7 percentage points since May'20 to 59%) and that he is visionary (also down 7% percentage points since May'20 to 41%).
- Less people also think he is trustworthy (down 4 percentage points to 52%) and about the same number think he is more honest than most politicians (50%).

Views towards gender equality in Australia

Q To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about gender equality in Australia?

TOTAL: Agree	Mar'21	Change from Jun'20	Jun'20	Sep'18	Mar'16
Gender equality, meaning that men and women are equal, has come far enough already	45%	-2%	47%	47%	38%
Gender equality has already been mostly achieved	50%	-1%	51%	47%	41%
Work to achieve gender equality today benefits mostly well-to-do people	60%	+4%	56%	45%	39%
There should be laws that require equal salaries for men and women in the same position	83%	+3%	80%	78%	78%
Although there has been significant progress on gender equality there is still a long way to go	76%	+5%	71%	66%	71%
Base (n)	1,074	-	1,085	1,030	1,001

- 76% of people agree that although there has been significant progress on gender equality there is still a long way to go (up 5 percentage points since June last year) and consistent with the upwards trend since Sep'18.
- 60% now think work to achieve gender equality today benefits mostly well-to-do people and 83% think there should be laws that require equal salaries for men and women in the same position. Agreement towards these statements has risen slightly by 4 and 3 percentage points respectively since Jun'20.
- Slightly fewer think gender equality has come far enough already (down 2 percentage points to 45%) and half (50%) still think gender equality has already been mostly achieved.



Views towards gender equality in Australia

Q To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about gender equality in Australia?

	TOTAL: Agree	Total	Gender		Age Group			Federal Voting Intention				
			Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Labor	TOTAL: Coalition	Greens	TOTAL: Other	
Gender equality, meaning that men and women are equal, has come far enough already	45%		56%	34%	45%	51%	39%	40%	52%	22%	52%	
Gender equality has already been mostly achieved	50%		62%	39%	52%	54%	45%	46%	58%	29%	55%	
Work to achieve gender equality today benefits mostly well-to-do people	60%		63%	57%	69%	65%	47%	61%	57%	60%	64%	
There should be laws that require equal salaries for men and women in the same position	83%		77%	89%	82%	82%	86%	87%	83%	87%	77%	
Although there has been significant progress on gender equality there is still a long way to go	76%		69%	82%	78%	77%	72%	80%	69%	92%	74%	
		Base (n)	1,074	527	547	326	363	385	335	396	106	138

- Agreement that there should be laws that require equal salaries for men and women in the same position is high overall, with 89% of women and 77% of men agreeing. Of this, 73% of women and 49% of men strongly agree.
- Many also agree although there has been significant progress on gender equality there is still a long way to go, with 82% of women and 69% of men in agreement with this (respectively, 50% and 38% strongly agree).
- However, men are still more likely than women to agree that gender equality has come far enough already (56% to 34%) and that it has already been mostly achieved (62% to 39%).



Trust in institutions to ensure work is a safe place for women

Q How much would you trust the following institutions to ensure work is a safe place for women?

	TOTAL: Trust	TOTAL: Don't trust	Have a lot of trust	Have some trust	Have little trust	Have no trust at all	Unsure
Public service	50%	42%	14%	37%	30%	11%	8%
Private companies	48%	42%	11%	37%	31%	12%	9%
Political offices	34%	59%	10%	24%	33%	26%	7%
Sporting clubs	40%	51%	10%	29%	35%	17%	9%
Entertainment industry	36%	55%	11%	25%	36%	20%	8%

- Overall, trust in institutions to ensure work is a safe place for women is lacking. However, there is the least trust in political offices – 59% don't trust political offices to ensure this, and of this, nearly a third (26%) have no trust at all.
- The entertainment industry tracks only slightly ahead of political offices with 55% not trusting it to ensure work is a safe place for women.
- About half trust the public service and private companies (50% and 48% respectively) to ensure this, however of this the majority only have some trust – only 14% and 11% have a lot of trust in public service and private companies respectively.

Trust in institutions to ensure work is a safe place for women

Q How much would you trust the following institutions to ensure work is a safe place for women?

TOTAL: Trust	Total	Gender		Age Group			Federal Voting Intention			
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Labor	TOTAL: Coalition	Greens	TOTAL: Other
Public service	50%	56%	45%	52%	55%	44%	51%	57%	53%	40%
Private companies	48%	56%	41%	48%	48%	49%	46%	56%	49%	49%
Political offices	34%	41%	27%	34%	38%	30%	30%	45%	21%	31%
Sporting clubs	40%	49%	30%	39%	42%	37%	40%	44%	26%	45%
Entertainment industry	36%	42%	31%	32%	43%	33%	37%	41%	25%	41%
Base (n)	1,074	527	547	326	363	385	335	396	106	138

- While trust in political offices is low overall, just 27% of women trust political offices to ensure work is a safe place for them.
- Compared to other voters, Greens voters are the least likely to trust political offices to ensure a safe working environment for women (21% to 30% Labor voters, 45% Coalition and 31% minor and independent party voters).



Views towards sexual assault of women in Parliament

Q To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the recent allegations of rape and sexual assault from women working in Parliament?

	TOTAL: Agree	Total	Gender		Age Group			Federal Voting Intention				
			Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Labor	TOTAL: Coalition	Greens	TOTAL: Other	
The government has been more interested in protecting itself than the interests of those who have been assaulted	65%		62%	68%	66%	69%	61%	76%	51%	88%	69%	
Women can face a hard time in workplaces in all professions, but politics has a particular problem with harassment and assault	61%		58%	64%	62%	64%	58%	67%	54%	75%	56%	
Workplaces only change when women are equally represented in leadership positions	57%		52%	62%	60%	59%	53%	60%	52%	69%	57%	
There is no difference in the way the different political parties treat women	45%		54%	37%	36%	44%	54%	41%	53%	30%	48%	
		Base (n)	1,074	527	547	326	363	385	335	396	106	138

- 65% agree the government has been more interested in protecting itself than the interests of those who have been assaulted, with Greens voters most likely to agree with this statement (88%), followed by Labor voters (76%) and minor and independent party voters (69%). About half (51%) of Coalition voters agree with this.
- Less than half (45%) agree there is no difference in the way the different political parties treat women. Of this, 53% of Coalition voters agree, compared to 30% of Greens voters, 41% of Labor voters and 48% of minor and independent party voters.
- 61% agree women can face a hard time in workplaces in all professions, but politics has a particular problem with harassment and assault. 44% of Greens voters strongly agree with this, compared to 34% Labor voters and 35% minor and independent party voters. Only 21% of Coalition voters strongly agree with this statement.



- 57% agree workplaces only change when women are equally represented in leadership positions and while agreement towards this is consistent across most demographics, men are more likely than women to disagree (20% to 9% respectively).



Frequency of reading news on technology platforms

Q How frequently do you use technology platforms like Google and social media to search for and read news articles?

	Mar'21	Sep'20
At least daily	49%	52%
At least once a week	24%	22%
At least once a month	7%	8%
Less frequently than one a month	10%	6%
Never	11%	11%
Base (n)	1,074	1,076

	Total	Age Group		
		18-34	35-54	55+
At least daily	49%	51%	58%	38%
At least once a week	24%	28%	25%	20%
At least once a month	7%	10%	6%	5%
Less frequently than one a month	10%	7%	6%	17%
Never	11%	4%	6%	20%
Base (n)	1,074	326	363	385

- Just under half (49%) of adult Australians use Google and social media to search and read news on a daily basis (down 3 percentage points since Sep'20). A further 24% use these platforms at least weekly.
- People aged 35-54 are the heaviest consumers of news through Google and social media, with 58% using these platforms on a daily basis.



Support towards measures to regulate big tech companies

Q To what extent would you support or oppose the following measures if they were introduced to regulate big tech companies?

	TOTAL: Support	TOTAL: Oppose
Force tech companies to remove misinformation and disinformation from their platforms	76%	8%
Require tech companies to let you know all the information about you they hold and give you the right to remove it from their servers	76%	10%
Prevent tech companies from selling your personal information to other companies	79%	8%
Enforce upon tech companies the payment of tax on all Australians earnings	69%	9%

- Support towards the stated measures to regulate big tech companies is high overall. Support is highest for the measure to prevent tech companies from selling people’s personal information to other companies (79%), followed by the measure to force tech companies to remove misinformation and disinformation from their platforms (76%), and the measure to require tech companies to let you know all the information about you they hold and give you the right to remove it from their servers (76%).
- 69% support the measure to enforce upon tech companies the payment of tax on all Australians earnings.



Support towards measures to regulate big tech companies

Q To what extent would you support or oppose the following measures if they were introduced to regulate big tech companies?

TOTAL: Support	Total	Gender		Age Group			Federal Voting Intention			
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Labor	TOTAL: Coalition	Greens	TOTAL: Other
Force tech companies to remove misinformation and disinformation from their platforms	76%	74%	77%	70%	69%	87%	75%	76%	85%	75%
Require tech companies to let you know all the information about you they hold and give you the right to remove it from their servers	76%	75%	76%	70%	71%	85%	78%	77%	81%	72%
Prevent tech companies from selling your personal information to other companies	79%	79%	79%	73%	75%	88%	78%	80%	85%	80%
Enforce upon tech companies the payment of tax on all Australians earnings	69%	73%	65%	57%	64%	84%	71%	71%	67%	74%
Base (n)	1,074	527	547	326	363	385	335	396	106	138

- Support is highest among those over 55 towards preventing tech companies from selling your personal information to other companies (88% compared to 75% of those 35-54 and 73% of those 18-34).
- Those over 55 are also more likely to strongly support the measure to force tech companies to remove misinformation and disinformation from their platforms than younger cohorts (68% to 46% 35-54 and 44% 18-34).



- While support is high overall towards requiring tech companies to let you know all the information about you they hold and give you the right to remove it from their servers, again, those over 55 are more likely to strongly support this than younger audiences (63% to 51% 35-54 and 46% those 18-34).



Appendix: Household income definitions*

TOTAL: 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)
TOTAL: 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)
TOTAL: 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 Research Society membership and are bound by professional codes of behaviour.