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Executive Summary

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 28th April to 1st May 2011 and is based on 1,021 respondents.

Aside from the standard question on voting intention, this week's report includes questions on perceptions and attitudes of the media.

The methodology used to carry out this research is available in appendix on page 9.

Please 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 =1,857

First preference/leaning to	Election 21 Aug 10	4 weeks ago	2 weeks ago	Last week	This week
Liberal		43%	43%	43%	44%
National		3%	3%	4%	3%
Total Lib/Nat	43.6	46%	47%	47%	47%
Labor	38.0	36%	35%	35%	35%
Greens	11.8	10%	11%	10%	9%
Other/Independent	6.6	8%	8%	8%	9%

2PP	Election 21 Aug 10	4 weeks ago	2 weeks ago	Last week	This week
Total Lib/Nat	49.9%	53%	54%	54%	54%
Labor	50.1%	47%	46%	46%	46%

NB. The data in the above tables comprise 2-week averages derived 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 2010 election.



Interest in Federal Politics

Q. When it comes to following Federal politics, which best describes you?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Aged 18-34	Aged 35-54	Aged 55+
I follow it closely	10%	12%	13%	8%	7%	10%	17%
I follow it enough to know what's happening	45%	46%	49%	45%	30%	49%	57%
I follow it when something big is happening	18%	19%	20%	24%	27%	14%	15%
I only pay attention when there's an election	8%	7%	9%	6%	13%	8%	3%
I have no interest in politics	14%	14%	8%	15%	17%	16%	6%
Can't say	4%	2%	1%	2%	6%	4%	2%

55% say they follow Federal politics closely or enough to know what's happening, 26% follow it only at elections or when something big is happening and 14% have no interest in politics.

Older respondents tended to follow Federal politics more closely than younger respondents - 74% of those aged 55+ follow it closely or enough to know what's happening compared to only 37% of those aged 18-34. Greens voters (53%) were a little less likely to follow politics than Labor (58%) or Liberal/National voters (62%).

Change in Interest in Federal Politics

Q. Over the last few years has your interest in following Federal politics increased or decreased?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Aged 18-34	Aged 35-54	Aged 55+
Total increased	29%	30%	35%	32%	37%	26%	25%
Total decreased	11%	11%	6%	15%	11%	12%	11%
Increased a lot	8%	10%	10%	7%	11%	7%	8%
Increased a little	21%	20%	25%	25%	26%	19%	17%
Stayed much the same	56%	56%	59%	54%	47%	60%	62%
Decreased a little	6%	7%	4%	7%	4%	6%	8%
Decreased a lot	5%	4%	2%	8%	7%	6%	3%
Can't say	4%	3%	*	-	7%	3%	1%

56% say their interest in following Federal politics has stayed much the same, 29% have more interest and 11% less interest.

Respondents aged 18-34 were more likely to have more interest in following Federal politics (37%) while older voters' interest was more likely to have stayed much the same.



Trust in Media

Q. How much would you say you trust each of the following media sources to provide you with the news and information you want about Australian politics?

								A lot/some trust		
	Total a lot/some trust	Total not much/no trust	A lot of trust	Some trust	Not much trust	No trust at all	Don't know	Aged 18-34	Aged 35-54	Aged 55+
ABC TV	76%	15%	29%	47%	9%	6%	9%	73%	77%	79%
SBS	70%	15%	24%	46%	10%	5%	15%	69%	72%	67%
ABC radio	69%	17%	25%	44%	11%	6%	14%	66%	71%	71%
Daily newspapers	53%	40%	6%	47%	31%	9%	7%	52%	53%	52%
Commercial TV	45%	48%	4%	41%	35%	13%	7%	42%	48%	44%
Sky News	41%	25%	7%	34%	17%	8%	34%	46%	42%	34%
Commercial radio	40%	48%	4%	36%	34%	14%	12%	34%	44%	41%

The most trusted media for news and information about politics were ABC TV (76%), SBS (70%) and ABC radio (69%). The least trusted were commercial radio and commercial TV (both 48% not much or no trust).

Those aged 18-34 tended to have more trust in Sky News (46%) but less trust in commercial radio (34%).

The major differences by voting intention were that Liberal/National voters have more trust in commercial TV (52%), Sky News (48%) and commercial radio (49%).

Perceptions of Media

Q. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Total agree	Total disagree	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
The media usually reports the news accurately	35%	54%	2%	33%	41%	13%	12%
The media usually reports all sides of a story	21%	69%	1%	20%	46%	23%	10%
The media is too critical of government and politicians in Australia	29%	57%	4%	25%	46%	11%	14%
These days I rely more on the internet than newspapers and TV for my news and information about politics.	44%	46%	12%	32%	37%	9%	10%
I trust the media more than I trust politicians	37%	43%	4%	33%	33%	10%	20%
I trust politicians more than I trust the media	16%	65%	1%	15%	44%	21%	18%
The media does a good job of scrutinizing politics and holding politicians accountable	45%	43%	3%	42%	31%	12%	12%
Overall, the media are politically biased in favour of the Liberal Party	19%	55%	4%	15%	44%	11%	26%
Overall, the media are politically biased in favour of the Labor Party	23%	50%	5%	18%	41%	9%	25%
The media are too focused on personalities and not enough on policies	70%	18%	21%	49%	15%	3%	12%
There is too much coverage of politics in the media	34%	52%	7%	27%	45%	7%	14%
The media does a good job of helping people to understand political and social issues	40%	48%	2%	38%	36%	12%	12%
I follow the news closely every day	57%	38%	10%	47%	32%	6%	6%

The majority of respondents disagree that the media usually reports all sides of a story (69%) and that the media reports the news accurately (54%).

However, they tend to trust the media a little more than they trust politicians – 37% agree they trust the media more and 16% agree they trust politicians more.

The results also indicate that respondents want more rather than less coverage of politics – only 34% agree that there is too much coverage of politics and 57% disagree that the media is too critical of government and politicians.

Respondents were divided over whether the media does a good job of scrutinizing politics and holding politicians accountable (45% agree/43% disagree) and tended to disagree that the media does a good job of helping people to understand political and social issues (40% agree/48% disagree).

70% agree that the media are too focused on personalities and not enough on policies.

A minority of respondents think the media are biased – 23% think they are biased in favour of the Labor Party and 19% in favour of the Liberal Party.



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 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 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 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 Tuesday night of each week and closed on the following Sunday. Incentives are offered to participants in the form of points.

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.

