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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 between the 30th November and 4th December 2011 and is based on 1,058 respondents.

Aside from the standard question on voting intention, this week's report includes questions on important issues, party trusted most to handle issues, a new Federal election, Christmas spending and membership of organisations.

The methodology used to carry out this research is available in the appendix on page 11.

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 = 1,922 respondents

First preference/leaning to	Election 21 Aug 10	4 weeks ago	2 weeks ago	Last week	This week
Liberal		43%	46%	45%	44%
National		3%	3%	3%	3%
Total Lib/Nat	43.6%	46%	48%	48%	47%
Labor	38.0%	35%	34%	34%	34%
Greens	11.8%	9%	10%	11%	10%
Other/Independent	6.6%	9%	7%	8%	9%

2PP	Election 21 Aug 10	4 weeks ago	2 weeks ago	Last week	This week
Total Lib/Nat	49.9%	54%	55%	54%	54%
Labor	50.1%	46%	45%	46%	46%

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 2010 election.



Federal Election

Q. Do you think the Labor Government should run its full term until 2013 when the next Federal election is due or should a new election be held now?

	5 Sept 11	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens
Should run to 2013	40%	47%	89%	20%	73%
Should hold election now	48%	41%	7%	74%	16%
Don't know	12%	12%	4%	6%	11%

47% think that the Labor Government should be allowed to run its full term through to 2013 and 41% think a new election should be held. This is almost exactly the reverse of the results when this question was previously asked in September when 48% thought an election should be held now and 40% thought the Government should run its full term.

Support for the Government to run its full term has increased among Labor voters (from 82% to 89%) and Liberal/National voters (11% to 20%) but dropped from 80% to 73% for Greens voters.

Important election issues

Q. Which are the three most important issues in deciding how you would vote at a Federal election?

	First	Second	Third	Total	6 June 11	24 Jan 11	11 Oct 10	25 Jan 10
Management of the economy	39%	16%	7%	62%	61%	65%	62%	63%
Ensuring a quality education for all children	4%	8%	10%	22%	26%	26%	32%	23%
Ensuring the quality of Australia's health system	12%	18%	17%	47%	49%	49%	48%	48%
Protecting the environment	4%	5%	4%	13%	15%	13%	12%	16%
A fair industrial relations system	3%	4%	4%	11%	8%	10%	11%	*
Political leadership	7%	6%	5%	18%	17%	16%	16%	23%
Addressing climate change	3%	4%	3%	10%	15%	10%	11%	16%
Controlling interest rates	2%	4%	5%	11%	13%	21%	17%	15%
Australian jobs and protection of local industries	11%	12%	13%	36%	32%	30%	30%	33%
Ensuring a quality water supply	*	2%	2%	4%	5%	6%	6%	12%
Housing affordability	3%	4%	6%	13%	16%	16%	17%	14%
Ensuring a fair taxation system	3%	5%	8%	16%	17%	18%	16%	14%
Security and the war on terrorism	1%	1%	2%	4%	8%	5%	6%	9%
Treatment of asylum seekers	2%	3%	3%	8%	5%	5%	5%	*
Managing population growth	1%	3%	4%	8%	12%	11%	10%	*

*Not asked

62% of people surveyed rated management of the economy as one of their three most important issues, followed by 47% ensuring the quality of Australia's health system and 36% Australian jobs and protection of local industries.

Since June, there have been only minor changes in these figures - there has been an increase in the importance of Australian jobs and protection of local industries (+4%) and declines in the importance of addressing climate change (-5%), ensuring a quality education for all children (-4%), managing population growth (-4%) and security and the war on terrorism (-4%).



Party trust to handle important election issues

Q. And which party would you trust most to handle the following issues?

	Labor	Liberal	Greens	Don't know
Management of the economy	27%	45%	2%	25%
Ensuring a quality education for all children	34%	36%	5%	25%
Ensuring the quality of Australia's health system	31%	34%	6%	29%
Protecting the environment	16%	23%	37%	24%
A fair industrial relations system	38%	34%	5%	23%
Political leadership	23%	40%	5%	33%
Addressing climate change	19%	25%	31%	25%
Controlling interest rates	24%	42%	2%	32%
Protecting Australian jobs and protection of local industries	32%	35%	4%	29%
Ensuring a quality water supply	18%	30%	24%	29%
Housing affordability	23%	33%	5%	38%
Ensuring a fair taxation system	28%	37%	4%	31%
Security and the war on terrorism	21%	40%	3%	35%
Treatment of asylum seekers	17%	36%	12%	35%
Managing population growth	18%	35%	9%	39%

Labor does not have a substantial lead over the Liberal Party on any item measured. The 9% lead it had in June on “a fair industrial relations system” has been reduced to 4%. There is also little difference between Labor and the Liberals for ensuring a quality education for all children, ensuring the quality of Australia’s health system and protecting Australian jobs and protection of local industries.

The Liberal Party has maintained strong leads on management of the economy, controlling interest rates, political leadership and security and the war on terrorism.

Overall, there has been a slight weakening of Labor’s position since June.



Christmas Spending

Q. And now about Christmas spending - compared to last year, do you expect to be spending more on gifts at Christmas, less or much the same?

	Dec 08	Dec 09	Nov 10	Dec 11
Will spend more	3%	11%	10%	13%
Will be spending less	38%	38%	38%	40%
Spend much the same	55%	47%	48%	44%
Don't know	5%	4%	5%	3%

Views about spending on gifts at Christmas remain similar to last year's. 13% say they will spend more (up 3%), 40% spend less (up 2%) and 44% much the same (down 4%).

23% of those aged under 35 say they will spend more, 46% of those aged 35-44 will spend less and 56% of those aged 55+ will spend much the same. There is no significant relationship between changes in spending and income.



Christmas Spending on Credit Cards

Q. How much of your Christmas spending do you put on your credit cards?

All or most of it	23%
A bit more than half	7%
About half	9%
A bit less than half	5%
Not much	17%
None of it	37%
Don't know	3%

39% say they will put at least half their Christmas spending on credit cards - and a further 22% will put some spending on their credit cards.

Those most likely to use credit cards for at least half their spending were aged 25-34 (49%) and those least likely to use credit cards for Christmas spending were aged 18-24 (22%). Those on higher incomes were much more likely to use their credit cards for Christmas spending - 54% of those on incomes over \$1,600pw said they would put at least half on credit cards compared to only 18% of those on incomes under \$600pw.

41% of those who say they are very concerned about their level of credit card debt and 54% of those who are somewhat concerned say they will put at least half their Christmas spending on credit cards.



Credit Card Debt

Q. How concerned are you about the amount you currently owe on your credit cards?

Very concerned	11%
Somewhat concerned	16%
Not very concerned	27%
Don't owe anything on credit cards	44%
Don't know	1%

27% say they are very or somewhat concerned about the amount they owe on their credit cards. Those most concerned were aged 35-44 (35%) and full-time workers (35%). There was little difference across income groups.

12% of those who intend to put more than half their Christmas spending on credit cards say they are very concerned about their current credit card debt and 23% are somewhat concerned.



Membership of Organisations

Q. Which of the following types of organisations have you ever been a member of?

Q. Which of the following types of organisations are you currently a member of?

Q. And which of the following types of organisations have you joined in the last 12 months?

	Ever been a member	Currently a member	Joined in last 12 months
Trade union	34%	9%	2%
Professional organization	28%	13%	3%
Environment group	9%	4%	2%
Religion/church	31%	13%	2%
Book club	14%	4%	1%
Service organisation like Rotary, Lions, Apex, etc	9%	4%	1%
School organisation e.g. parents club, school council	22%	4%	2%
Sports club	38%	17%	6%
Political party	6%	1%	*
Local community group	21%	11%	3%
Special interest or hobby group e.g. gardening, birdwatching, chess, etc	20%	10%	3%
Other organisation	9%	6%	1%
Total members	81%	56%	20%

56% say they are currently members of an organisation and 20% say they have joined an organisation in the last 12 months. The most popular types of organisations are sports clubs (17% members) religions/churches (13%) and professional organisations (13%). Membership of organisations is slightly lower for those aged under 35 (53%) and a little higher for those aged 55+ (58%). 59% of men and 53% of women say they are members of an organisation.

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.

