



Essential Report

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With data supplied by



Executive Summary

This 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 2nd to the 8th of November and attracted 1105 responses.

Aside from the standard question we ask each week on Federal voting intention, this week we ask people to give their approval rating of the Prime Minister and Opposition Leader. We ask a series of questions about interest rate rises – specifically if people will be impacted personally, whether they think a rise in interest rates is a sign of economic improvement and perceptions on what people think causes a rise in interest rates. We also attempt to gauge whether people think the Australian economy is in a better position than it was twelve months ago. Given the recent issue of asylum seekers, this week we ask people whether they approve of the way the Federal Government has handled the issue and whether they think the Liberal Party would do a better job at handling the issue or much the same. This week we also ask a question about the recent oil leak near on the Kimberley coast.

The methodology used to carry out this research is available in appendix one (page 13).

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



Federal politics – voting intention

Q. If there was a Federal election held today, to which party would you probably give your first preference?

Q. If you 'don't know' on the above question, which party are you currently leaning to?

*2029 sample size

2 week average	%	2PP	2PP shift from last week
Liberal	33%		
National	2%		
Total Lib/Nat	35%	41%	-
Labor	48%	59%	-
Greens	9%		
Family First	3%		
Other/Independent	5%		

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 two week's data.



Approval of the Prime Minister

Q. Do you strongly approve, approve, disapprove or strongly disapprove of the job Kevin Rudd is doing as Prime Minister?

	29 Sep 08	27 Oct 08	24 Nov 08	12 Jan 09	9 Feb 09	30 Mar 09	18 May 09	29 June 09	10 Aug 09	28 Sept 09	9 Nov 09
Strongly approve	12%	16%	15%	14%	17%	21%	14%	14%	13%	15%	14%
Approve	46%	50%	50%	52%	50%	50%	48%	48%	47%	51%	47%
Disapprove	18%	14%	13%	16%	15%	14%	18%	18%	17%	17%	19%
Strongly disapprove	12%	8%	10%	6%	8%	7%	11%	9%	10%	6%	13%
Don't know	12%	12%	12%	11%	9%	9%	9%	11%	12%	11%	8%
Total approve	58%	66%	65%	66%	67%	71%	62%	62%	60%	66%	61%
Total disapprove	30%	22%	23%	22%	23%	21%	29%	29%	27%	23%	32%

61% of people surveyed approve of the job Kevin Rudd is doing as Prime Minister and 32% disapprove. Kevin Rudd's approval rating has decreased five percentage points since we last asked this question in September and his disapproval rating has increased nice percentage points. The disapproval rating is the highest recorded over the last year.

Approval followed party lines – Labor voters were more likely to approve of the job Kevin Rudd is doing as Prime Minister (93%) while Coalition voters were more likely to disapprove (69%). 25% of Coalition voters approve of the job Kevin Rudd is doing as Prime Minister.

The net rating (approve minus disapprove) is +29% - down from +43% recorded in September but only 4 points down on the results recorded from May to August.



Approval of the Opposition Leader

Q. Do you strongly approve, approve, disapprove or strongly disapprove of the job Malcolm Turnbull is doing as Opposition Leader?

	29 Sept 08	27 Oct 08	24 Nov 08	12 Jan 09	9 Feb 09	30 Mar 09	18 May 09	29 June 09	10 Aug 09	28 Sept 09	9 Nov 09
Strongly approve	6%	4%	5%	4%	3%	3%	2%	4%	2%	3%	3%
Approve	30%	32%	33%	37%	29%	25%	28%	20%	20%	24%	26%
Disapprove	18%	21%	24%	21%	26%	31%	28%	31%	30%	35%	30%
Strongly disapprove	12%	11%	9%	9%	17%	17%	21%	26%	28%	18%	20%
Don't know	35%	32%	29%	29%	24%	24%	21%	19%	20%	21%	20%
Total approve	36%	36%	38%	41%	32%	28%	30%	24%	22%	27%	29%
Total disapprove	30%	32%	33%	30%	43%	48%	49%	57%	58%	53%	50%

29% of people surveyed approve of the job Malcolm Turnbull is doing as Opposition Leader and 50% disapprove. Turnbull's approval rating has increased slightly since we last asked this question (+2%), and his disapproval rating has seen a slight decrease (-3%).

Approval followed party lines – Coalition voters were more likely to approve (56%), while Labor voters were more likely to disapprove (70%). 28% of Coalition voters disapprove of the job Turnbull is doing as Opposition Leader.

Malcolm Turnbull's net rating of -21% is a 5 point improvement on the September result and his best result since May.



Interest rate rises – personal impact

Q. Will the recent increase in official interest rates make you personally better or worse off financially?

	%
Total better off	15%
Total worse off	41%
Much better off	2%
A little better off	13%
A little worse off	31%
Much worse off	10%
Make no difference	40%
Don't know	4%

41% of people think that the recent increase in official interest rates make them worse off personally, 15% think the interest rate increase will make them better off and 40% think it will make no difference to their personal financial situation.

People aged 55 years and over were more likely to indicate that the increase in official interest rates will make them better off (36%) while middle aged people were more likely to indicate that it will make them worse off (53% of 25 – 34 year olds, 54% of 35 – 44 year olds).

People in full-time work were more likely to indicate that the interest rate increase will make them worse off (55%).

Perception that the rise in interest rates will make people worse off increased with salary - 46% of people earning \$600 - \$1000 per week/46% of those earning \$1000 - \$1600 per week and 49% of those earning \$1600+ per week think it will make them worse off. 55% of those earning \$600 per week or less think the interest rate increase will make no difference to their personal financial situation.



Interest rate rises – a sign that the economy is improving or getting worse

Q. Do you think the recent increase in official interest rates indicates that Australia's economy is getting better or getting worse?

	%
Economy is getting better	53%
Economy is getting worse	12%
Neither	28%
Don't know	7%

Just over half (53%) think the recent increase in official interest rates indicates that Australia's economy is getting better, 12% think it is an indication that the economy is getting worse and 28% think it is not a sign that the economy is getting better or worse.

Labor voters were more likely to think the interest rate rise is a sign that the economy is getting better (61%), while Coalition voters were a little more likely than the average to think that it is a sign that the economy is getting worse (18%). 48% of Coalition voters think that the recent interest rate increase is a sign that the economy is getting better.



Cause of interest rate rises

Q. Which of the following statements most closely reflects your opinion on the cause of the recent increase in official interest rates?

	%
The Reserve Bank independently sets interest rates to avoid inflation	30%
It's just a correction to the historic low interest rates during the Global Financial Crisis	18%
The Federal Government has managed the economy well and the rate increase is a sign of a strong economy	15%
The Federal Government has managed the economy badly and so rates are rising	9%
The world economy is the biggest factor in interest rates, not the Australian economy	9%
House prices are rising and pushing up interest rates	5%
Don't know	15%

When it comes to what the public perceive are the causes of the recent increase in official interest rates, 30% think that the Reserve Bank independently sets interest rates to avoid inflation and 18% think that interest rate rises are a correction to the historic low interest rates during the Global Financial Crisis. 15% think that the Federal Government has managed the economy well and the rate increase is a sign of a strong economy.

Only 9% think it is because the Government has managed the economy badly.

Coalition voters were more likely to think that the Reserve Bank independently setting interest rates to avoid inflation is the cause of the recent increase in interest rates (39%). Labor voters were more likely to think the increase in interest rates is because the Federal Government has managed the economy well and the rate increase is a sign of a strong economy (28%). Green voters were more likely to think the recent interest rate rises are just a correction to the historic low interest rates during the Global Financial Crisis (24%).



Economic conditions in Australia

Q. Over the next 12 months do you think economic conditions in Australia will get better, get worse or stay much the same?

	1 Dec 08	23 Feb 09	18 May 09	15 Jun 09	6 Jul 09	21 Aug 09	5 Oct 09	9 Nov 09
Total better	21%	19%	25%	43%	50%	55%	66%	53%
Total worse	61%	65%	56%	37%	31%	23%	15%	23%
Get a lot better	2%	2%	2%	5%	7%	9%	8%	7%
Get a little better	19%	17%	23%	38%	43%	46%	58%	46%
Get a little worse	45%	42%	37%	28%	23%	17%	11%	17%
Get a lot worse	16%	23%	19%	9%	8%	6%	4%	6%
Stay much the same	13%	12%	13%	17%	15%	18%	15%	21%
No opinion	5%	4%	5%	3%	4%	3%	4%	4%

Just over half (53%) think that over the next 12 months, economic conditions in Australia will get better, 23% think they will get worse and 21% think they will stay much the same.

The number of people that think economic conditions in Australia will get better over the next 12 months has decreased thirteen percentage points since we last asked this question in October this year, and the number that think economic conditions will get worse has increased eight percentage points. However, the current results are very similar to the August survey results and considerably more positive than results recorded up to June.

Labor voters were more likely to think economic conditions will get better (65%), Coalition voters were more likely to think they will get worse (30%) and Green voters were more likely to think conditions will stay much the same (34%).

People earning \$1600 per week or more were more likely to think economic conditions will get better (60%), while people earning \$600 - \$1000 per week were more likely to think they will get worse (32%).



Federal Government handling of asylum seekers

Q. Thinking about the way the Federal Government has handled the asylum seeker issue recently, do you think they have been too tough, too weak or have they taken about the right approach?

	%
Too tough	9%
Too weak	52%
Taken about the right approach	28%
Don't know	11%

Just over half (52%) think that the Federal Government has been too weak in how it has handled the asylum seeker issue recently, 28% think the Government have taken the right approach and 9% think they have been too tough.

Males were more likely than females to think the Federal Government has been too weak (55% v 49%).

People aged 55 years and over were more likely than 18 – 24 year olds to think the Government's action has been too weak (64% v 32%).

Labor voters were more likely to think the Federal Government has taken about the right approach (43%), Coalition voters were more likely to think the Government has been too weak (76%) and Green voters were more likely to think the Government's approach has been too tough (33%).

43% of Labor voters think the Federal Government has been too weak in its handling of the asylum seeker issue recently.



Party best at handling the issue of asylum seekers

Q. Which party do you think would be best at handling the issue of asylum seekers?

	%
Labor	23%
Liberal	27%
No difference	37%
Don't know	13%

27% of people surveyed think Liberal is the best party at handling the issue of asylum seekers, 23% think Labor is and 37% think there is no difference in how the two major parties would handle the issue.

Attitudes followed party lines – Coalition voters were more likely to prefer Liberal (65%) and Labor voters more likely to prefer Labor (65%).

54% of Green, 38% of Labor voters and 24% of Coalition voters think there is no difference between how Liberal or Labor would handle the issue of asylum seekers.

People aged 55 years and over were more likely to think Liberal would be best (36% Liberal to 22% Labor), while people aged under 35 were more likely to think Labor would be best at handling the issue of asylum seekers (27% Labor to 20% Liberal).

Males were more likely to think Liberal would be the party best to handle the issue (31%), while females were more likely to think there is no difference (40%).



Oil leak near the Kimberley coast

Q. Thinking about the oil rig off the Kimberley coast which has recently caught fire after leaking oil and gas into the ocean for 10 weeks – do agree or disagree that if the oil spill had occurred near an area like the Great Barrier Reef, the Federal Government would have done much more to prevent damage to the marine environment?

	%
Total agree	75%
Total disagree	7%
Strongly agree	41%
Somewhat agree	34%
Somewhat disagree	6%
Strongly disagree	1%
Don't know	17%

75% of people agree that the Federal Government should have done much more to prevent damage to the marine environment after the recent oil spill off the Kimberley coast.



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 19th 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 Tuesday night of each week and closed on the following Sunday. 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.

