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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 omnibus was conducted online from the 23rd to the 28th of March and attracted 1104 responses.

Aside from the standard question on voting intention, this week we ask people to rate their approval of the Prime Minister and Opposition Leader, and which major party and leader they trust to deliver health care. We gauge from the public whether they think economic conditions in Australia and their personal financial situation will get better or worse over the next 12 months. This week we also ask a series of questions related to the economic stimulus package.

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?

*1902 sample size

2 week average	%	2PP	2PP shift from last week
Liberal	36%		
National	3%		
Total Lib/Nat	39%	46%	+2%
Labor	43%	54%	-2%
Greens	9%		
Family First	2%		
Other/Independent	7%		

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 polling data.



Approval of the Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd

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

	30 Mar 09	18 May 09	29 Jun 09	10 Aug 09	28 Sept 09	9 Nov 09	30 Nov 09	14 Dec 09	18 Jan 10	22 Feb 10	29 Mar 10
Strongly approve	21%	14%	14%	13%	15%	14%	9%	10%	11%	11%	12%
Approve	50%	48%	48%	47%	51%	47%	47%	47%	44%	41%	41%
Disapprove	14%	18%	18%	17%	17%	19%	20%	20%	19%	20%	22%
Strongly disapprove	7%	11%	9%	10%	6%	13%	15%	12%	14%	17%	14%
Don't know	9%	9%	11%	12%	11%	8%	10%	10%	12%	11%	12%
Total approve	71%	62%	62%	60%	66%	61%	56%	57%	55%	52%	53%
Total disapprove	21%	29%	29%	27%	23%	32%	35%	32%	33%	37%	36%

Just over half (53%) of people surveyed approve of the job Kevin Rudd is doing as Prime Minister, 36% disapprove and 12% don't know. Rudd has a net approval rating of +17%.

There has been little shift in Rudd's approval and disapproval rating since we last asked this question in February.

92% of Labor voters approve of the job Rudd is doing as Prime Minister, 4% disapprove and 4% don't know.

79% of Coalition voters disapprove of the job Rudd is doing and 15% approve.

72% of Green voters approve of the job Rudd is doing.



Approval of the Opposition Leader, Tony Abbott

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

	Turnbull							Abbott			
	30 Mar 09	18 May 09	29 Jun 09	10 Aug 09	28 Sept 09	9 Nov 09	30 Nov 09	14 Dec 09	18 Jan 10	22 Feb 10	29 Mar 10
Strongly approve	3%	2%	4%	2%	3%	3%	2%	7%	5%	12%	8%
Approve	25%	28%	20%	20%	24%	26%	23%	27%	32%	33%	25%
Disapprove	31%	28%	31%	30%	35%	30%	33%	18%	20%	20%	28%
Strongly disapprove	17%	21%	26%	28%	18%	20%	22%	18%	17%	16%	22%
Don't know	24%	21%	19%	20%	21%	20%	19%	31%	26%	18%	16%
Total approve	28%	30%	24%	22%	27%	29%	25%	34%	37%	45%	33%
Total disapprove	48%	49%	57%	58%	53%	50%	55%	36%	37%	36%	50%

33% of people approve of the job Abbott is doing as Opposition Leader, 50% disapprove and 16% don't know. Abbott has a net approval rating of -17%.

Abbott's approval rating has decreased 12% since we last asked this question in February, and his disapproval rating has increased by 14%.

72% of Coalition voters approve of the job Abbott is doing as Opposition Leader, 19% disapprove and 10% don't know. In February the comparative figures were 79% approve and 12% disapprove.

73% of Labor voters disapprove of the job Abbott is doing (up from 58%), 16% approve (down from 28%).

75% of Green voters disapprove of the job Abbott is doing as Opposition Leader (up 7%).

The largest shifts in approval occurred with older voters – among those aged 55+, approval has dropped from 61% to 42% and disapproval increased from 31% to 50%. Voters for other parties have also shifted substantially - from 36% approval to 17% and from 46% disapproval to 70%.



Trust to deliver health care

Q. Who do you trust most to deliver better health care for people like you and your family – Kevin Rudd or Tony Abbott?

Q. Which party do you trust most to deliver better health care for people like you and your family – the Labor Party the Liberal Party?

	% n=553		% n=551
Kevin Rudd	45%	Labor Party	45%
Tony Abbott	29%	Liberal Party	25%
Don't know	26%	Don't know	30%

When it comes to which leader people trust to deliver better health care for people like you and your family, 45% prefer Kevin Rudd, 29% prefer Tony Abbott and 26% don't know.

When it comes to which party people trust to deliver better health care for people like you and your family, 45% prefer the Labor Party, 25% prefer the Liberal Party and 30% don't know.

Results followed party lines – Labor voters were more likely to think trust Rudd (84%) and the Labor Party (89%) to deliver better health care. Coalition voters were more likely to trust Abbott (68%) and the Liberal Party (73%) to deliver better health care.

12% of Coalition voters trust Rudd and 6% trust Labor to deliver better health care.



Economic conditions in Australia over the next 12 months

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	18 Jan 10	29 Mar 10
Total better	21%	19%	25%	43%	50%	55%	66%	53%	54%
Total worse	61%	65%	56%	37%	31%	23%	15%	19%	19%
Get a lot better	2%	2%	2%	5%	7%	9%	8%	9%	9%
Get a little better	19%	17%	23%	38%	43%	46%	58%	44%	45%
Get a little worse	45%	42%	37%	28%	23%	17%	11%	14%	13%
Get a lot worse	16%	23%	19%	9%	8%	6%	4%	5%	6%
Stay much the same	13%	12%	13%	17%	15%	18%	15%	24%	22%
No opinion	5%	4%	5%	3%	4%	3%	4%	4%	6%

Just over half (54%) of those surveyed think that over the next 12 months, economic conditions in Australia will get better, 19% think they will get worse, 22% think they will stay much the same and 6% have no opinion.

Results are reasonably similar to those obtained earlier this year.

Labor voters were more likely to think conditions will get better (73%) and Coalition voters were more likely to think conditions will get worse (28%).

Males were more likely to think things will get better (59%) while females were more likely to think conditions will stay much the same (26%).

There were no significant differences in terms of age.



Personal financial situation

Q. Over the next 12 months do you think your personal financial situation will get better, get worse or stay much the same?

	%
Total better	40%
Total worse	23%
Get a lot better	8%
Get a little better	32%
Get a little worse	17%
Get a lot worse	6%
Stay much the same	33%
No opinion	4%

40% of people surveyed think that over the next 12 months their personal financial situation will get better, 23% think it will get worse, 33% think it will stay much the same and 4% have no opinion.

Labor voters were more likely to think their personal financial situation will get better over the next 12 months (51%) while Coalition voters were more likely to think their situation will get worse (27%).

People aged 25 – 34 were more likely to think their personal financial situation will get better (48%), those aged 45 – 54 were more likely to think their situation will get worse (28%) and people aged 65 years and over were more likely to think their situation will stay much the same (44%).



Job security

Q. How concerned are you that you or some member of your immediate family will lose their job in the next year or so: very concerned, somewhat concerned, or not at all concerned?

	16 Feb 09	27 Apr 09	8 Jun 09	6 Jul 09	31 Aug 09	5 Oct 09	18 Jan 10	29 Mar 10
Total concerned	62%	67%	52%	56%	53%	49%	45%	39%
Very concerned	22%	24%	13%	15%	18%	14%	12%	10%
Somewhat concerned	40%	43%	39%	41%	35%	35%	33%	29%
Not at all concerned	29%	23%	35%	32%	37%	40%	40%	45%
Don't know	4%	5%	6%	6%	5%	6%	8%	7%
No employees in the immediate family	5%	5%	8%	6%	5%	5%	8%	9%

39% of people surveyed are very/somewhat concerned that they or someone in their immediate family will lose their job in the next year or so, 45% are not at all concerned and 7% don't know.

Concern over job loss has decreased by six percent since we last asked this question in January and those not at all concerned has increased by five percent.

People aged 45 – 54 were more likely to be very/somewhat concerned that they or someone in their immediate family will lose their job over the next year or so (45%).



Government's economic stimulus package

Q. Do you support or oppose the following parts of the Government's economic stimulus package?

	Total support	Total oppose	Strongly support	Support	Neither support nor oppose	Oppose	Strongly oppose	Don't know
\$12.7 billion for bonuses of \$950 for people on low and middle incomes	57%	19%	24%	33%	20%	10%	9%	4%
\$14.7 billion for school building construction and maintenance	62%	15%	23%	39%	20%	7%	8%	4%
\$6.6 billion for public and community housing	61%	12%	20%	41%	23%	8%	4%	4%
\$3.9 billion for free ceiling insulation for 2.7 million homes	32%	39%	8%	24%	24%	14%	25%	5%
\$2.7 in tax breaks for small businesses	61%	8%	15%	46%	26%	5%	3%	5%

The elements of the stimulus package that received the most support are \$14.7 billion for school building construction and maintenance (62%), \$6.6 billion for public and community housing (61%) and \$2.7 in tax breaks for small businesses (61%).

The element of the stimulus package that receives the least amount of support is \$3.9 billion for free insulation for 2.7 million homes (32%). 39% oppose the insulation scheme and 26% neither support nor oppose it.

Labor voters were more likely to support money for school building construction and maintenance (82%), public and community housing (75%) and the \$950 bonuses for people on low and middle incomes (75%). Coalition voters were more likely to support tax breaks (67%).

55% of Green voters, 49% of Labor voters and 17% of Coalition voters support the free ceiling insulation for 2.7 million homes.



Government's economic stimulus package – comparison with 2009

Q. Do you support or oppose the following parts of the Government's economic stimulus package?

	29 March 2010		16 February 2009		<i>Shift in support since 2009</i>
	Total support	Total oppose	Total support	Total oppose	
\$12.7 billion for bonuses of \$950 for people on low and middle incomes	57%	19%	66%	18%	-9%
\$14.7 billion for school building construction and maintenance	62%	15%	84%	3%	-22%
\$6.6 billion for public and community housing	61%	12%	73%	7%	-12%
\$3.9 billion for free ceiling insulation for 2.7 million homes	32%	39%	46%	24%	-14%
\$2.7 in tax breaks for small businesses	61%	8%	72%	8%	-11%

There has been a decrease in support for various elements of the stimulus package since we last asked this question in 2009.

The most significant shifts since we asked this question in 2009 are in terms of school building construction and maintenance (-22%), and free insulation for 2.7 million homes (-14%).



Government spending

Q. Do you think the Government should continue to invest and spend to support economic recovery or should they address the deficit and start cutting back on spending?

	%
Continue to invest and spend to support economic recovery	34%
Address the deficit and start cutting back on spending	52%
Don't know	14%

Just over half (52%) of people surveyed think the Government should address the deficit and start cutting back on spending, 34% think the Government should continue to invest and spend to support economic recovery and 14% don't know.

Labor voters were more likely to think the Government should continue to invest and spend to support economic recovery (53%), while Coalition voters were more likely to think the Government should address the deficit and start cutting back on spending (76%).

People aged 65 years and over were more likely to think the Government should address the deficit and cut back on spending (60%), while people aged 18 – 24 were more likely to indicate they don't know (24%).

Males were also more likely to agree the Government should address the deficit and cut back on spending (55%).



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.

