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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 11th to 15th May 2011 and is based on 1,016 respondents.

Aside from the standard question on voting intention, this week's report includes on the Federal Budget and plans for processing asylum seekers.

The methodology used to carry out this research is available in appendix on page 10.

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 =1,871

First preference/leaning to	Election 21 Aug 10	4 weeks ago	2 weeks ago	Last week	This week
Liberal		43%	44%	44%	43%
National		3%	3%	3%	3%
Total Lib/Nat	43.6	47%	47%	47%	46%
Labor	38.0	35%	35%	35%	36%
Greens	11.8	11%	9%	10%	11%
Other/Independent	6.6	8%	9%	8%	7%

2PP	Election 21 Aug 10	4 weeks ago	2 weeks ago	Last week	This week
Total Lib/Nat	49.9%	54%	54%	54%	52%
Labor	50.1%	46%	46%	46%	48%

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 Budget

Q. Thinking about the Federal Budget – how much attention did you pay to this week’s Federal Budget?

	2009	2010	2011
Total a lot/some	66%	53%	52%
Total a little/none	31%	44%	45%
A lot	29%	18%	19%
Some	37%	35%	33%
A little	25%	29%	31%
None	6%	15%	14%
Can’t say	3%	3%	2%

Just over half (52%) of respondents said they paid a lot or some attention to the Federal Budget. This is much the same as the corresponding figure of 53% for last year’s budget.

Those most interested were Liberal/National voters (64%) and people aged 55+ (63%). Only 42% of respondents aged 18-34 paid a lot or some attention to the budget.

Perceived Impact of Budget

Q. Do you think the Federal Budget was good or bad for you personally?

Q. Do you think the Federal Budget was good or bad for Australian businesses?

Q. Do you think the Federal Budget was good or bad for the Australian economy overall?

	You personally		Businesses		The economy overall	
	2010	2011	2010	2011	2010	2011
Total good	22%	11%	27%	20%	36%	27%
Total bad	26%	29%	32%	25%	28%	29%
Very good	3%	2%	3%	3%	6%	4%
Good	19%	9%	24%	17%	30%	23%
Neither good nor bad	33%	44%	9%	31%	10%	25%
Bad	18%	21%	22%	19%	18%	21%
Very bad	8%	8%	10%	6%	10%	8%
Don't know	20%	16%	31%	23%	26%	20%

Overall there was a less positive response to the 2011 budget than to the 2010 budget. The main differences were that respondents were less likely to rate the budget good and more likely to think it was neither good nor bad. The proportions who thought it was bad were similar to last year.

44% of respondents thought the Federal budget was neither good nor bad for them personally - 11% said it was good and 29% bad. The only substantial differences by demographics were that 51% of respondents aged 55+ thought it was neither good nor bad.

25% thought the budget was bad for business, 20% good and 31% said it was neither. 35% of Labor voters said it was good for business and 45% of Liberal/National voters said it was bad.

Respondents were split over whether it was good or bad for the economy overall – 27% said it was good and 29% bad. Labor voters split 50% good/9% bad compared to Liberal/National voters at 12% good/51% bad.



Economy Heading in the Right/Wrong Direction

Q. Overall, from what you have read and heard, do you think the Australian economy is heading in the right direction or the wrong direction?

	Post budget 2010	Pre budget 2011	Post budget 2011	Vote Labor	Vote Liberal/ National	Vote Greens
The right direction	51%	45%	46%	74%	30%	46%
The wrong direction	25%	29%	29%	9%	49%	24%
Don't know	24%	25%	25%	17%	21%	30%

Nearly half (46%) the respondents think that Australia's economy is heading in the right direction – 29% think it is heading in the wrong direction. This was a little less positive than the post 2010 budget poll, but unchanged from the poll taken before the 2011 budget – which suggests that the budget has had no impact on overall perceptions of the economy.

74% of Labor voters, 30% of Liberal/National voters and 46% of Greens voters think the economy is heading in the right direction.

Party Best at Handling Economy

Q. Which party do you think would be best at handling the Australian economy in the interests of you and people like you?

	Post budget 2010	Post budget 2011	Vote Labor	Vote Liberal/ National	Vote Greens
Labor Party	33%	30%	75%	3%	36%
Liberal Party	36%	40%	4%	84%	11%
No difference	20%	22%	17%	10%	46%
Don't know	11%	9%	4%	3%	7%

30% think Labor the party best to handle the economy (in the interests of you and people like you) and 40% nominated the Liberal Party. This represents a shift of 7% in favour of the Liberal Party since the 2010 budget.

75% of Labor voters nominated Labor and 84% of Coalition voters nominated the Liberal Party. 46% of Greens voters said there was no difference – 36% said Labor and 11% Liberal.

Those with incomes under \$600 pw favour Labor 32% to 30% while those on \$1,600+ pw favour the Liberals 49% to 29%.

Processing Asylum Seekers

Q. The Government has announced two possible agreements with Malaysia and Papua New Guinea on asylum seekers. Under these agreements, asylum seekers arriving by boat in Australia will be sent to either Malaysia or PNG for processing, and in return Australia will take a fixed number of refugees from Malaysia.

Do you support or oppose the Government's plan to send asylum seekers arriving by boat in Australia to PNG and Malaysia?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Liberal/ National	Vote Greens
Total support	40%	55%	40%	29%
Total oppose	40%	25%	49%	53%
Strongly support	11%	16%	12%	5%
Support	29%	39%	28%	24%
Oppose	20%	16%	19%	33%
Strongly oppose	20%	9%	30%	20%
Don't know	19%	20%	12%	17%

Respondents were divided over the Government's plan to send asylum seekers arriving by boat in Australia to PNG and Malaysia – 40% support and 40% oppose. Labor voters were more likely to support the plan (55%) while Greens voters were most likely to oppose it (53%).

There were no substantial differences by demographic groups.

Processing Asylum Seekers

Q. Do you support or oppose the Government's plan to send asylum seekers arriving by boat in Australia to PNG and Malaysia if it means it will cost taxpayers substantially more than it would if we just processed asylum seekers on the mainland in Australia?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Liberal/ National	Vote Greens
Total support	24%	35%	23%	15%
Total oppose	60%	49%	66%	69%
Strongly support	6%	8%	6%	3%
Support	18%	27%	17%	12%
Oppose	29%	31%	25%	35%
Strongly oppose	31%	18%	41%	34%
Don't know	16%	16%	11%	16%

Respondents were more likely to oppose the plan to send asylum seekers arriving by boat in Australia to PNG and Malaysia if it means it will cost taxpayers substantially more than it would if we just processed asylum seekers on the mainland in Australia – 24% support and 60% oppose.

Labor voters showed the largest shift in opinion if increased cost to taxpayers was taken into account – their opposition increased from 25% to 49%.

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.

