

COALITION AHEAD 54% TO 46%

Key findings

- *Two-party vote: Coalition 54% (down 2) lead ALP 46% (up 2) [based on 2010 election preferences]*
- *First preferences: Labor 32% (up 2), Coalition 45% (down 2), Greens 11% (down 1)*
- *Ms Gillard's approval at 39% (up 2); disapproval at 57% (down 1)*
- *Mr Abbott's approval at 39% (steady); disapproval at 57% (up 1)*
- *Preferred PM: Gillard 46% (up 3), Abbott 45% (down 3)*

The ALP is in its best position in six months but would still be defeated if an election was held now, according to the latest Nielsen Poll.

The national poll of 1,400 respondents, taken from Thursday to Saturday (23-25 August 2012), shows the Coalition with 54% of the two-party preferred vote (down two points since 26-28 July) ahead of the ALP on 46% (up 2). This is Labor's best two-party result since late February, when the Coalition was ahead 53% to 47%.

On primaries Labor is on 32% (up 2) and the Coalition is down two to 45%. The Greens lead the minor parties with 11% (down 1). Family First is on 2% (steady), and independents are on 6% (up 1). Other parties are on 5% (up 1).

Labor's primary vote has increased steadily over the last three months, rising a statistically significant six points from 26% to 32%. The Coalition's primary vote has fallen four points since early May to 45%.

Despite Labor's improvement, the Liberal and National parties would win an election held now with a two-party preferred swing of around 4%.

When the two-party vote is calculated by *how respondents said they would allocate preferences*, the result is Coalition 54% (down 1) ahead of the ALP on 46% (up 1).

[Compared to the Nielsen Poll taken 26-28 July 2012, none of the movements in two-party and primary vote are statistically significant.]

The leaders

Ms Gillard's approval rating is 39% (up 2). Disapproval of Ms Gillard is 57% (down 1), giving her a net approval of minus 18 which is up three points. (39% approval minus 57% disapproval = -18%). This is Ms Gillard's highest approval and lowest disapproval since February.

Mr Abbott's approval is 39% (steady), continuing to equal his personal record low. Disapproval of Mr Abbott is up one to 57, equal to his record high. Mr Abbott's net approval is down 1 to -18%, equalling his record low.

[None of the changes in approval for Ms Gillard and Mr Abbott were statistically significant.]

Ms Gillard is ahead of Mr Abbott as preferred Prime Minister for the first time since February. Ms Gillard is on 46% (up 3) and Mr Abbott is on 45% (down 3).

[Ms Gillard's lead over Ms Abbott as preferred PM is not statistically significant. The changes in support for Ms Gillard and Mr Abbott were not statistically significant.]

Questions

- Q.1a If a Federal Election for the House of Representatives were held today, which party would receive your first preference vote - ALP, Liberal, National, Greens, Independent, Family First, Other?
- Q.1b [IF UNDECIDED] Which party do you have a leaning towards at present?
- Q.1c [IF MINOR PARTY SUPPORT] At a Federal Election you will be required to vote for all candidates in your electorate in order of preference. Given this, will you give a higher preference to the Labor Party candidate or the Liberal/National Party candidate?
- Q.2a How strongly do you approve or disapprove of the performance of Ms Gillard as Prime Minister? Do you strongly approve, approve, disapprove or strongly disapprove of her performance?
- Q.2b How strongly do you approve or disapprove of the performance of Mr Abbott as Leader of the Opposition? Do you strongly approve, approve, disapprove or strongly disapprove of his performance?
- Q.3 Who is your preferred Prime Minister?

MAJORITY SAY CARBON TAX MAKING NO DIFFERENCE

Key findings

- 54% (up 2) say the carbon price is making no difference
- 40% (up 2) say they are worse off under carbon price
- Support for a 'price on carbon' steady at 36%; 59% (down 1) are opposed

A majority of Australians say the carbon price and compensation package is making no difference to them according to the latest Nielsen Poll.

The national poll of 1,400 respondents, taken from Thursday to Saturday (23-25 August 2012) found that opposition to a price on carbon is down one point (since late July) to 59%. Just over one in three (36%, steady) are in favour. Support is highest among Green and ALP voters (79% and 61% respectively) while a majority of Coalition voters (84%) are opposed.

[The changes in support/opposition for a carbon price are not statistically significant.]

CARBON PRICE (%)	Pre-introduction of carbon price											Post-introduction				
	Oct-10	Feb-11	Mar-11	Apr-11	Jun-11	Jul-11	Aug-11	Oct-11	Mar-12	May-Jun 12	Jun-12	Jul-12	Aug-12	ALP voters	L/NP voters	GRN voters
Support	46	46	35*	34	38*	39	39	37	36	37	33	36	36	61	13	79
Oppose	44	44	56*	59	56	56	56	59	60	59	62	60	59	34	84	17

* indicates change from previous poll is statistically significant at the 5% level

Asked to say how they personally had been affected by the introduction of the carbon price and compensation package, 3% (down 2) said they were better off, 40% (up 2) worse off and 54% (up 2) said it was making no difference.

In late June, just prior to the introduction of the carbon price, 51% expected to be worse off and 37% said it would make no difference.

IMPACT OF CARBON PRICE (%)	Pre-introduction of carbon price				Post-introduction of carbon price*				
	Jul 2011	Mar 2012	May-Jun 2012	Jun 2012	Jul 2012	Aug 2012	ALP voters	L/NP voters	GRN voters
Better off	6	5	5	5	5	3	6	-	6
Worse off	53	52	50	51	38	40	20	59	13
No difference	37	39	41	37	52	54	69	38	79

* Question changed from 'do you think you personally will be better off...' to 'do you think you personally are better off...'

[The changes in perceived impact of the carbon price are not statistically significant.]

Questions

Q.4 Do you support or oppose the introduction of a price on carbon? Is that strongly support / support / oppose / strongly oppose?

READ OUT 1-4	SINGLE RESPONSE	
Strongly support	12%	
Support	24%	(Total support = 36% after rounding)
Oppose	23%	
Strongly oppose	36%	(Total oppose = 59% after rounding)
DO NOT READ OUT		
Neither support nor oppose	3%	
Don't know	1%	

Q.5 Now that the carbon price and compensation package have been introduced do you think you personally are better off, worse off or has it made no difference?

DO NOT READ OUT	SINGLE RESPONSE	
Better off		3%
Worse off		40%
No difference		54%
Don't know		4%

MAJORITY SUPPORT ASYLUM SEEKER DECISION

Key findings

- 67% support offshore processing of asylum seekers in Papua New Guinea and Nauru
- 48% support the decision to increase the number of refugees Australia accepts from 13,750 per year to 20,000 per year; 49% are opposed

A majority of Australians support the decision to resume offshore processing of asylum seekers according to the latest Nielsen Poll.

The national poll of 1,400 respondents, taken from Thursday to Saturday (23-25 August) found that

67% support offshore processing of asylum seekers in Papua New Guinea and Nauru. A majority of supporters of both major parties are in favour of the decision. A majority of Green voters are opposed.

OFFSHORE PROCESSING IN PNG AND NAURU (%)	23-25 Aug 2012	ALP voters	L/NP voters	GRN voters
Support	67	59	81	40
Oppose	27	33	16	53

This result follows a Nielsen Poll finding in late June that 88% of voters wanted the major parties to compromise on asylum seeker policy.

Voters were split on the decision to increase the number of refugees Australia accepts from 13,750 per year to 20,000 per year. Just under half (49%) oppose the decision, while 48% are in favour.

INCREASE REFUGEE INTAKE (%)	23-25 Aug 2012	ALP voters	L/NP voters	GRN voters
Support	48	59	35	76
Oppose	49	39	61	22

Opinion polls on asylum seekers

Note that results of opinion polls on this issue are more sensitive to the context and wording of the questions than for most other topics. This is because the issues are difficult, complicated and, for some, emotional. Respondent knowledge on this subject is never complete. The task of adequately condensing complex options into fair but meaningful questions is a difficult one.

Nielsen Polls in August and September 2011 found that a majority of respondents preferred that asylum seekers arriving in Australia by boat be allowed to land to be assessed. One in four said that asylum seekers arriving in Australia by boat should be sent to another country to be assessed.

Questions

ROTATE Q6 & Q7

Q.6 Do you support or oppose the decision to resume offshore processing of asylum seekers in Papua New Guinea and Nauru? Is that strongly support / support / oppose / strongly oppose?

READ OUT 1-4

SINGLE RESPONSE

Strongly support

Support

Oppose

Strongly oppose

DO NOT READ OUT

Neither support nor oppose

Don't know

Q.7. Do you support or oppose the decision to increase the number of refugees Australia accepts from 13,750 per year to 20,000 per year? Is that strongly support / support / oppose / strongly oppose?

READ OUT 1-4

SINGLE RESPONSE

Strongly support

Support

Oppose

Strongly oppose

DO NOT READ OUT

Neither support nor oppose

Don't know

Poll Profile

Fieldwork Dates	: 23-25 August 2012
Sample Size	: 1,400 respondents
Sample Spread	: Nationwide, 18+
Method	: Telephone

The maximum margin of sampling error that might apply given this sample size is approximately 2.6%. Telephone numbers were selected at random. The data has been weighted to reflect the population distribution.

ESTIMATES OF FEDERAL VOTING INTENTION & LEADERSHIP APPROVAL											
	2-4 Feb 2012	22-23 Feb 2012	29-31 Mar 2012	9-10 May 2012	31 May 2 Jun 2012	28-30 Jun 2012	26-28 Jul 2012	23-25 Aug 2012			
Sample Size	n=1400	n=1200	n=1400	n=1200	n=1400	n=1400	n=1400	n=1400			
Margin of Error %	+/- 2.6%	+/- 2.8%	+/- 2.6%	+/- 2.8%	+/- 2.6%	+/- 2.6%	+/- 2.6%	+/- 2.6%			
Labor	33	34	27	28	26	28	30	32			
Coalition	45	44	47	49	48	48	47	45			
Greens	13	12	13	12	14	12	12	11			
Independent	5	6	6	5	6	5	5	6			
Family First	1	2	2	3	2	2	2	2			
Other	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	5			
<i>Two Party Preferred (by how respondents said they would allocate preferences)</i>											
Labor	48	48	44	42	43	42	45	46			
Coalition	52	52	56	58	57	58	55	54			
<i>Two Party Preferred (by how preferences flowed in 2010 election)</i>											
Labor	47	47	43	42	43	42	44	46			
Coalition	53	53	57	58	57	58	56	54			
<i>Prime Minister Performance</i>											
Approve	40	36	36	35	36	35	37	39			
Disapprove	55	60	59	60	60	60	58	57			
Uncommitted	5	4	4	5	4	4	5	5			
<i>Opposition Leader's Performance</i>											
Approve	41	41	39	44	39	39	39	39			
Disapprove	54	56	56	52	57	55	56	57			
Uncommitted	5	4	4	4	4	6	5	4			
<i>Preferred Prime Minister</i>											
Gillard	48	46	45	42	44	42	43	46			
Abbott	46	47	48	50	46	46	48	45			
Uncommitted	7	7	6	8	10	12	9	10			

The Nielsen poll is conducted on the telephone nationwide.

Uncommitted voters were redistributed. Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding.