

Polling - state fracking moratoria and renewable energy targets

September and May 2017

The Australia Institute regularly conducts polling on a range of public policy issues. The Australia Institute surveyed 1,421 Australians between 17 and 26 September 2017 about whether they support or oppose their state government implementing a moratorium on fracking for gas and an increased renewable energy target. Between 26 April and 5 May The Australia Institute polled 1,408 Australians about what they thought was increasing energy prices.

In September,

- Twice as many support a moratorium on fracking for gas in their own state (49%) than oppose it (24%).
- Three quarters (74%) of Australians support an increased renewable energy target in their own state.
- Support for state renewables targets is essentially unchanged since March 2016.¹

In May,

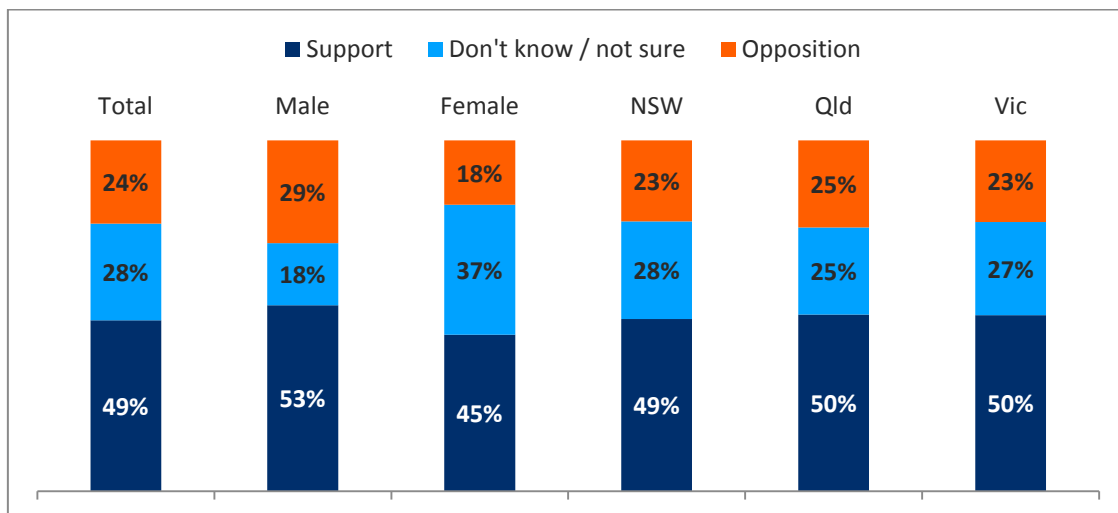
- Half of respondents said the main cause of increased gas prices was gas exports (52%), and one in six said the main cause was state bans on new unconventional gas extraction (17%).

¹ http://www.tai.org.au/sites/default/files/Polling%20Brief%20-%20March%202017%20-%20Renewables_1.pdf

- Half of Australians ranked moratoria as having the smallest impact on gas prices (54%).
- A majority (58%) blamed the “business practices of energy companies” for increased power prices.
- More than two in five (44%) blamed gas exports for increased power prices.
- Less than a quarter (23%) blamed renewable energy for increase power prices.

KEY RESULTS

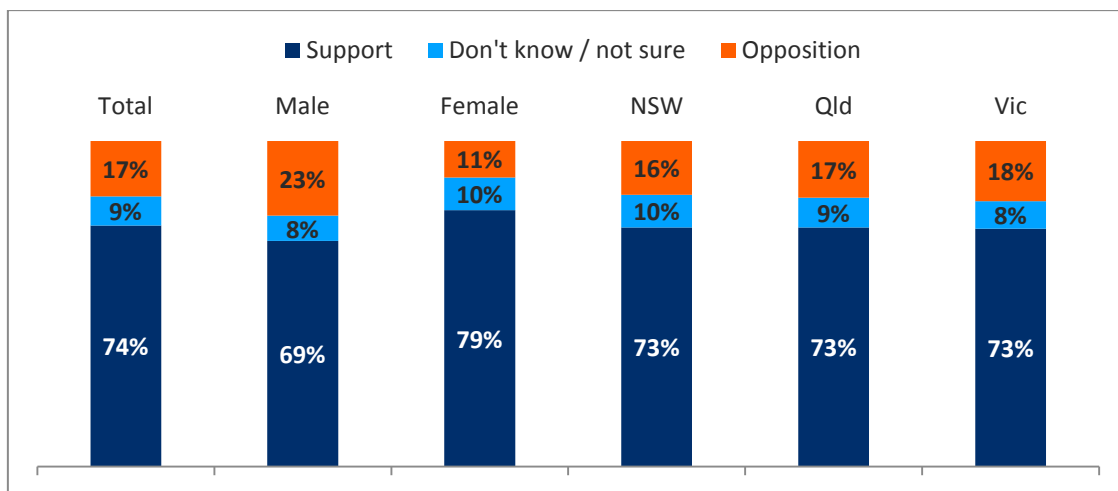
Support for gas moratorium



- Half of respondents supported their state government placing a moratorium on fracking for gas, twice as many as opposed it.
 - 49% supported a moratorium, 23% strongly supporting the idea.
 - 24% opposed the idea, with only 7% strongly opposing.
 - 28% said they were not sure.
- Men were more likely than women to support the idea (53% vs 29%) and to oppose the idea (45% vs 18%)
 - Women were much more likely to say they were unsure (37% vs 18%)
- In NSW, Vic and Qld there was support from around half of respondents and opposition from a quarter.
- In every age group and every voting group people were more likely to support than oppose.
 - By age, 65+ year olds were most likely both to support and to oppose (58% support, 31% oppose), while the lowest opposition was amongst 35-44 year olds (50% support, 18% oppose).

- By voting groups, the lowest support was amongst One Nation voters (42% support, 29% oppose), and highest opposition amongst LNP voters (46% support, 30% oppose), both showing more support than opposition.
- Similar polls in March 2017 and March 2016 found three quarters of Australians support a renewable energy target to build extra renewables in their state -- 77% in March 2017 and 76% in March 2016.² These three polls vary by 3 percentage points. The margin of error for the size of the sample is 3%.

Support for state renewables targets



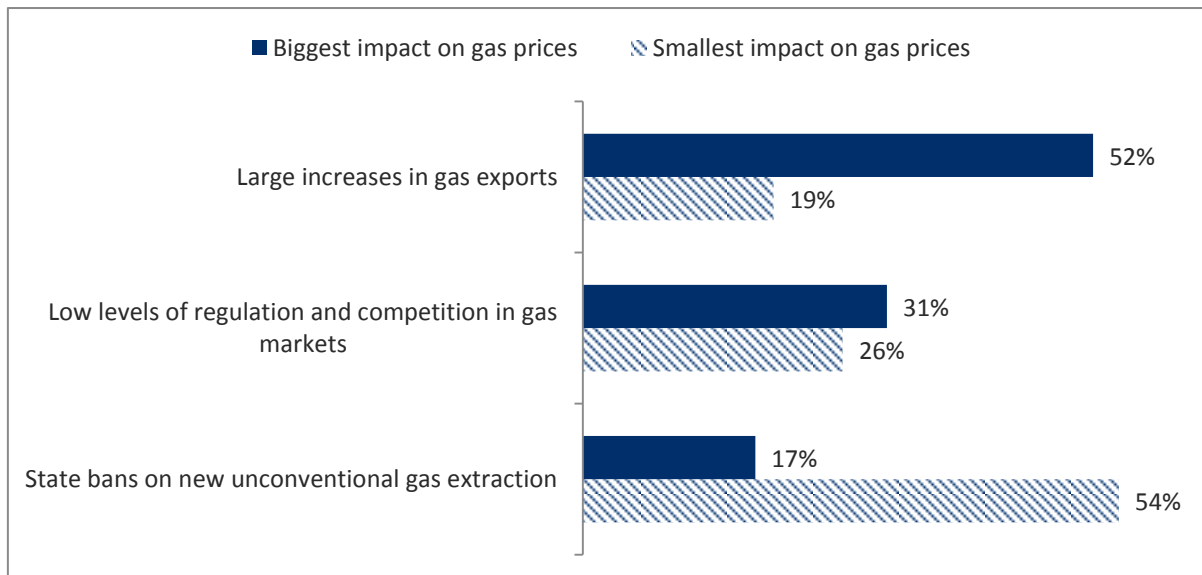
- Three quarters of respondents supported an increased renewable energy target, four times as many as opposed the idea.
 - 74% supported an increased renewable energy target in their state, including 38% who strongly supported it.
 - Only 17% opposed the idea. 9% were not sure.
- In NSW, Vic and Qld, there was support from around three quarters of respondents.
- Women were more likely than men to support (79% vs 69% support).
- Voters for every party were more than twice as likely to support as oppose an increased renewable target.
 - The lowest support was amongst One Nation voters (61%) and LNP voters (63%), in both cases twice as high as opposition in this group.
 - 74% of undecided voters supported the idea, and only 12% opposed it.

² http://www.tai.org.au/sites/default/files/Polling%20Brief%20-%20March%202017%20-%20Renewables_1.pdf

What is pushing up gas prices?

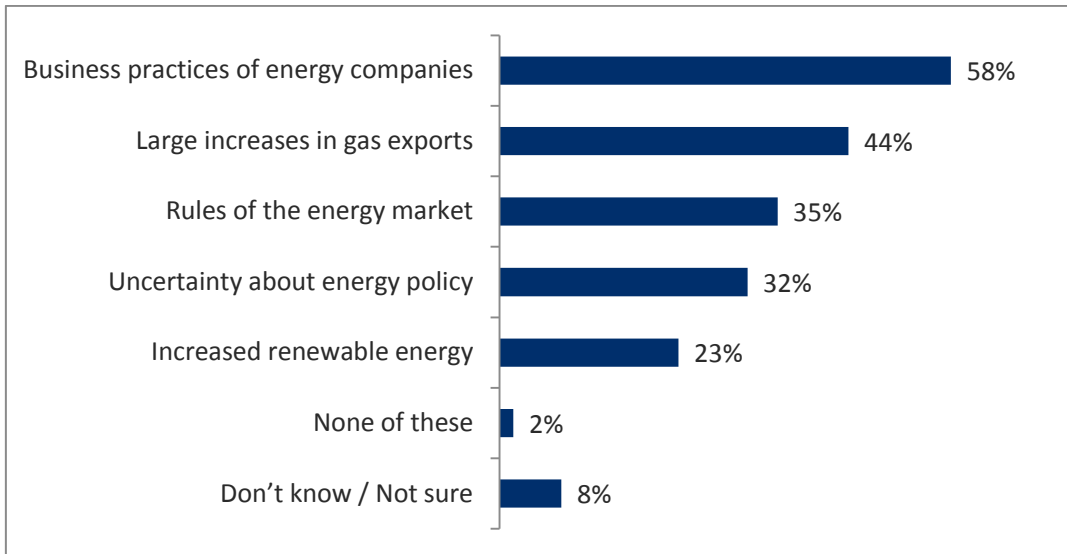
In the May 2017 poll, respondents were presented with three possible explanations for rising gas prices in the eastern states, and asked to rank them based on which they thought was having the biggest impact on electricity prices.

- Most (52%) said the biggest impact was from large increases in gas exports.
 - Only 19% ranked gas exports as having the *smallest* impact (ranked last).
- A third (31%) said that low levels of regulation and competition in gas markets were having the biggest impact.
- 17% said that state bans on new unconventional gas extraction were having the biggest impact.
 - Most (54%) said state bans were having the *smallest* impact.



What is pushing up power prices?

Respondents were asked about what they thought was pushing up electricity prices. They were presented with a list of five factors, and asked to select all those they thought were currently pushing up power prices. Respondents picked two on average; 'none of these' and 'don't know' were exclusive of other responses.



- Over half (58%) selected the business practices of energy companies as currently pushing up power prices.
- 44% selected large increases in gas exports as a cause.
- About a third selected the rules of the energy market (35%) and uncertainty about energy policy (32%).
- Only 23% identified increased renewable energy as a cause of higher prices.

METHOD

Between 17 and 26 September 2017 The Australia Institute conducted a national opinion poll of 1,421 people. Between 26 April and 5 May 2017 The Australia Institute conducted a national opinion poll of 1,408 people. Both polls were conducted through Research Now, with nationally representative samples by gender, age and state or territory.

Results are shown only for larger eastern states – New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland. States were included where the margin of error was 6% or lower.

Voting crosstabs show voting intentions for the lower house. Those who were undecided were asked which way they were leaning; these leanings are included in voting intention crosstabs, but results are also shown separately for undecideds. “LNP” includes separate responses for Liberal and National. “Other” includes Nick Xenophon Team and Independent/Other (and “Australian Conservatives” in May).

DETAILED RESULTS SEPT 2017

Do you support or oppose your state government doing the following in your state...?

Place a moratorium on fracking for gas

	Total	Male	Female	NSW	Qld	Vic
Total Support	49%	53%	45%	49%	50%	50%
Total Oppose	24%	29%	18%	23%	25%	23%
Strongly support	23%	26%	20%	22%	26%	23%
Support	26%	27%	24%	27%	24%	27%
Oppose	16%	19%	14%	16%	17%	15%
Strongly oppose	7%	10%	4%	7%	7%	8%
Don't know / not sure	28%	18%	37%	28%	25%	27%

	Total	LNP	ALP	Greens	PHON	Other	Undec
Total Support	49%	46%	53%	57%	42%	46%	39%
Total Oppose	24%	30%	19%	11%	29%	25%	21%
Strongly support	23%	18%	25%	35%	18%	27%	17%
Support	26%	28%	28%	22%	24%	19%	22%
Oppose	16%	22%	15%	8%	16%	14%	16%
Strongly oppose	7%	9%	4%	3%	13%	11%	5%
Don't know / not sure	28%	24%	28%	32%	29%	30%	40%

	Total	18-24y	25-34y	35-44y	45-54y	55-64y	65+
Total Support	49%	36%	41%	50%	52%	52%	58%
Total Oppose	24%	20%	21%	18%	24%	28%	31%
Strongly support	23%	13%	13%	23%	29%	29%	30%
Support	26%	22%	28%	27%	24%	23%	27%
Oppose	16%	16%	17%	13%	17%	20%	16%
Strongly oppose	7%	4%	5%	5%	7%	8%	15%
Don't know / not sure	28%	44%	38%	32%	24%	20%	11%

Increase its renewable energy target

	Total	Male	Female	NSW	Qld	Vic
Total Support	74%	69%	79%	73%	73%	73%
Total Oppose	17%	23%	11%	16%	17%	18%
Strongly support	38%	37%	40%	38%	37%	40%
Support	36%	33%	39%	36%	37%	33%
Oppose	9%	12%	6%	8%	9%	10%
Strongly oppose	8%	11%	6%	8%	8%	8%
Don't know / not sure	9%	8%	10%	10%	9%	8%

	Total	LNP	ALP	Greens	PHON	Other	Undec
Total Support	49%	63%	84%	95%	61%	71%	74%
Total Oppose	24%	27%	8%	2%	30%	17%	12%
Strongly support	23%	27%	43%	70%	24%	40%	34%
Support	26%	36%	41%	26%	37%	30%	41%
Oppose	16%	15%	6%	1%	11%	6%	7%
Strongly oppose	7%	12%	3%	1%	19%	10%	5%
Don't know / not sure	28%	10%	8%	3%	9%	13%	14%

	Total	18-24y	25-34y	35-44y	45-54y	55-64y	65+
Total Support	49%	77%	82%	82%	74%	67%	63%
Total Oppose	24%	11%	12%	9%	15%	25%	30%
Strongly support	23%	45%	44%	42%	38%	36%	28%
Support	26%	32%	38%	40%	36%	31%	35%
Oppose	16%	9%	7%	5%	7%	10%	16%
Strongly oppose	7%	2%	5%	4%	8%	14%	14%
Don't know / not sure	28%	12%	6%	10%	11%	8%	7%

DETAILED RESULTS MAY 2017

Q. Gas prices have recently increased in the eastern states. Which of these factors are having the biggest impact on power prices? Rank each of these options from 1 to 3, where 1 is having the biggest impact and 3 is having the smallest impact.

Results for explanations ranked first

(identified as having the biggest impact on power prices.)

	Total	Male	Female	NSW	Qld	Vic
Large increases in gas exports	52%	55%	48%	51%	54%	51%
Low levels of regulation and competition in gas markets	31%	26%	36%	33%	29%	31%
State bans on new unconventional gas extraction	17%	19%	16%	17%	18%	18%

	Total	LNP	Labor	Greens	PHON	Other	Undecided
Large increases in gas exports	52%	50%	51%	51%	60%	53%	47%
Low levels of regulation and competition in gas markets	31%	28%	34%	33%	28%	28%	39%
State bans on new unconventional gas extraction	17%	22%	15%	16%	12%	20%	15%

	Total	18-24y	25-34y	35-44y	45-54y	55-64y	65y+
Large increases in gas exports	52%	42%	39%	48%	57%	59%	63%
Low levels of regulation and competition in gas markets	31%	34%	40%	35%	30%	24%	22%
State bans on new unconventional gas extraction	17%	24%	21%	17%	13%	17%	15%

Q. Power prices have recently increased and may increase further. Which of the following do you think are currently pushing up power prices? (select all that apply, randomised order)

	Total	Male	Female	NSW	Qld	Vic
Business practices of energy companies	58%	59%	56%	54%	64%	59%
Large increases in gas exports	44%	47%	41%	47%	43%	46%
Rules of the energy market	35%	38%	33%	34%	34%	35%
Uncertainty about energy policy	32%	35%	28%	31%	33%	27%
Increased renewable energy	23%	24%	21%	24%	22%	21%
None of these	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%
Don't know / Not sure	8%	5%	11%	8%	7%	8%

	Total	LNP	Labor	Greens	PHON	Other	Undecided
Business practices of energy companies	58%	55%	59%	59%	59%	60%	55%
Large increases in gas exports	44%	48%	42%	42%	53%	40%	36%
Rules of the energy market	35%	35%	35%	39%	40%	36%	33%
Uncertainty about energy policy	32%	33%	31%	32%	26%	35%	30%
Increased renewable energy	23%	29%	21%	11%	35%	17%	20%
None of these	2%	2%	1%	3%	4%	2%	1%
Don't know / Not sure	8%	7%	9%	9%	3%	7%	12%

	Total	18-24y	25-34y	35-44y	45-54y	55-64y	65y+
Business practices of energy companies	58%	41%	52%	51%	59%	62%	74%
Large increases in gas exports	44%	40%	34%	35%	43%	55%	59%
Rules of the energy market	35%	33%	33%	37%	37%	37%	35%
Uncertainty about energy policy	32%	30%	30%	30%	31%	30%	37%
Increased renewable energy	23%	17%	24%	22%	18%	25%	29%
None of these	2%	1%	4%	2%	2%	1%	0%
Don't know / Not sure	8%	9%	7%	11%	9%	8%	3%