

Polling - Truth in political advertising

June 2020

Key results

In March, The Australia Institute surveyed a nationally representative sample of 1,461 Australians about political advertising.

Results show that the vast majority of Australians want truth in political advertising laws, consistent with the last four years of polling.

- Nine in 10 Australians (89%) say Australia should pass truth in political advertising laws, compared to 5% who say it should not.
- Agreement is similarly high among all voting intentions.
 - 89% of Coalition, 90% of Labor, 91% of Greens, 88% of One Nation and 86% of Independent/Other voters say Australia should pass truth in political advertising laws.
- Agreement is similarly high among both women and men (88% and 91%, respectively) and in the four largest states (between 88% and 91%).

Figure 1: Should Australia pass truth in political advertising laws? (voting intention)

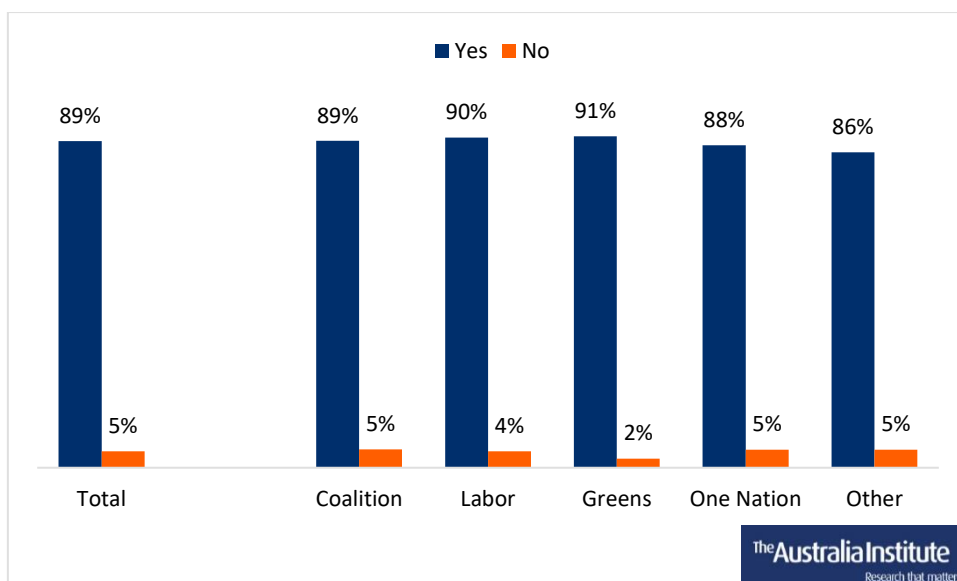
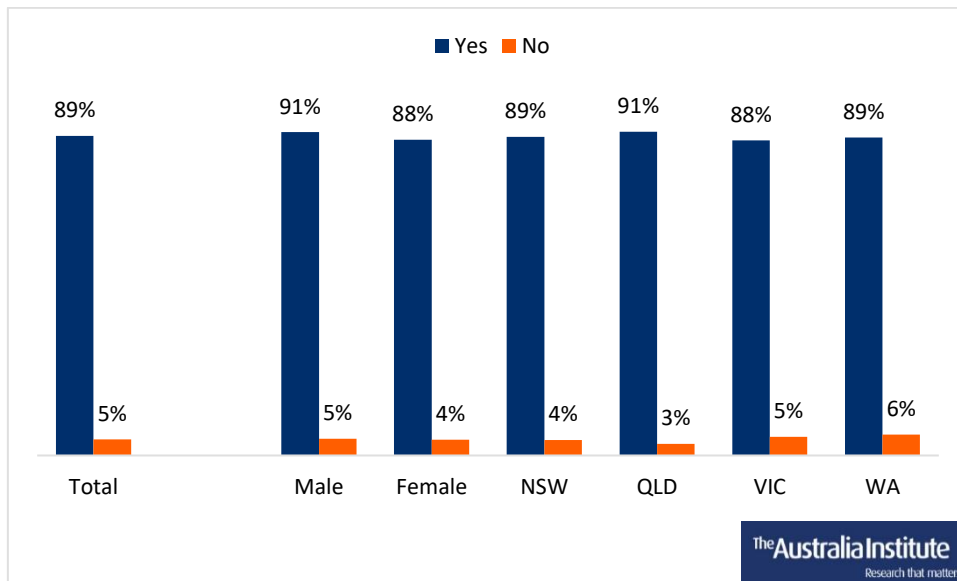


Figure 2: Should Australia pass truth in political advertising laws? (gender and state)



Previous polling

The Australia Institute has asked Australians their position on truth in political advertising laws in previous polls: July 2016 (post-election), July 2019, November 2019 and March 2020.¹ The three most recent polls used an identical question; the July 2016 poll asked a similar question that reflected the political situation at the time.²

Support for truth in political advertising laws was high in all four polls.

- There was some partisan variation in 2016, with 94% of Coalition voters and 78% of Labor voters in support.
 - There is little partisan variation evident between Coalition and Labor voters in 2019–2020 (between 1 and 3 percentage points).
- The most recent poll, March 2020, saw the highest portion of Australians saying that Australia should pass truth in political advertising laws (89%). This is a 5 percentage point increase from July 2019, and roughly equal to the result from July 2016.

¹ Browne (2019) *We can handle the truth: Opportunities for truth in political advertising*, <https://www.tai.org.au/content/we-can-handle-truth-opportunities-truth-political-advertising>; The Australia Institute (2016) *Truth in Political Advertising*, <http://www.tai.org.au/content/truth-political-advertising>

² In 2016, the question was: “Should the Senate pass ‘truth in political advertising’ legislation so that political parties and candidates can be fined for false and misleading advertising in the same way companies are?”

Figure 3: Should Australia pass truth in political advertising laws? (“Yes” answers)

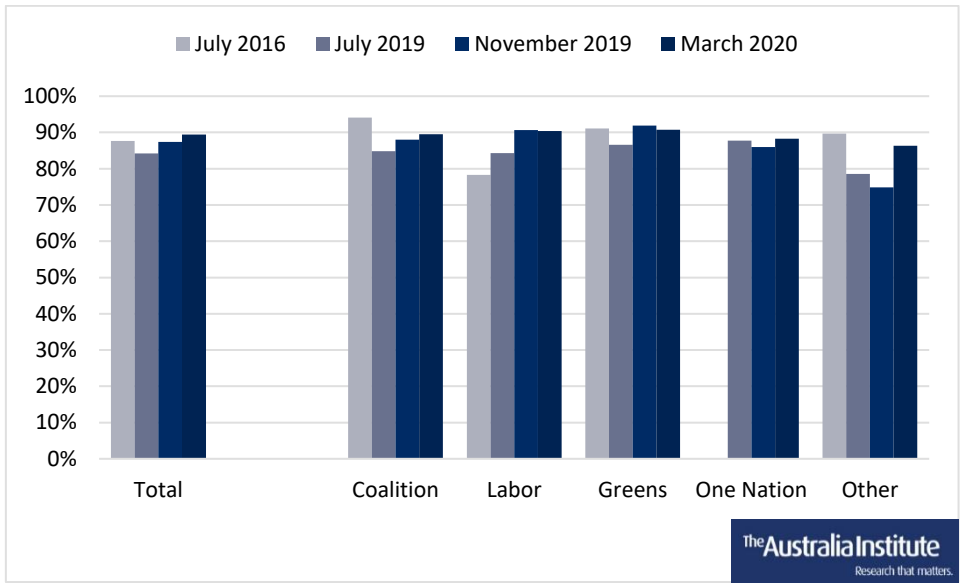
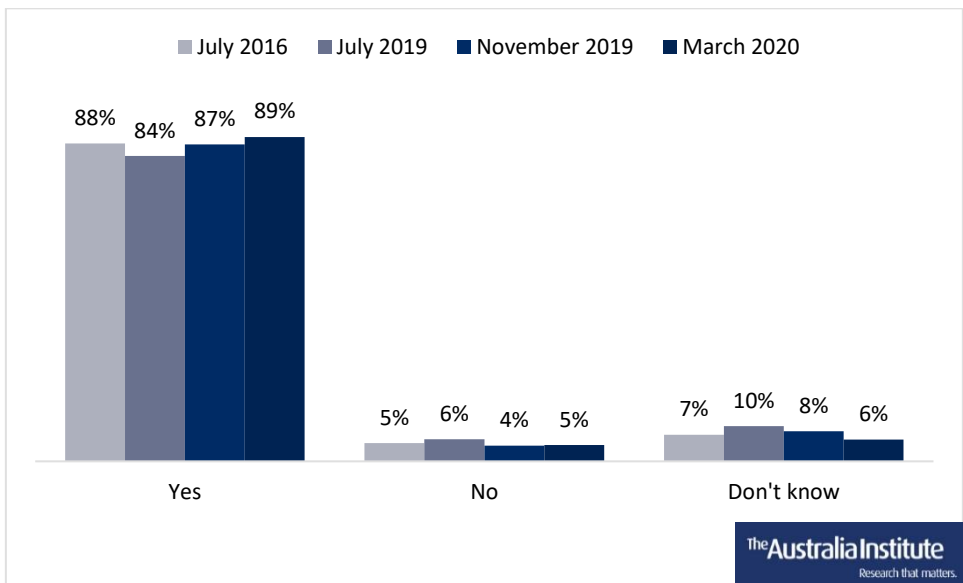


Figure 4: Should Australia pass truth in political advertising laws?



Method

Results and method for the 2016 and July 2019 data have already been published.³ This brief is the first appearance of the November 2019 and March 2020 data.

The Australia Institute conducted a national survey of 1,424 people between 1 and 15 November 2019 and a second national survey of 1,461 people between 3 and 6 March 2020, online through Dynata with nationally representative samples by gender, age, state and territory, and household income.

During the November 2019 Dynata poll, The Australia Institute also asked the question of a “boost” of 503 South Australians (post-weighted to reflect social demographics by age and gender in South Australia). This question was not asked of the SA “boost” in the March 2020 Dynata poll, so no SA result is published for the March 2020 results.

The margin of error (95% confidence level) for the national results is 2.6%.

Results are shown only for larger states, and South Australia in polls where additional SA residents were surveyed to provide a robust sample.

Voting crosstabs show voting intentions for the House of Representatives. Those who were undecided were asked which way they were leaning; these leanings are included in voting intention crosstabs. “Coalition” includes separate responses for Liberal and National. “Other” includes Centre Alliance, Jacqui Lambie Network and Independent/Other.

³ Browne (2019) *We can handle the truth: Opportunities for truth in political advertising*; The Australia Institute (2016) *Truth in Political Advertising*

Detailed results

November 2019

Should Australia pass ‘truth in political advertising’ laws so that it is illegal for political parties and candidates to publish ads that are inaccurate and misleading?

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>VIC</i>	<i>QLD</i>	<i>WA</i>	<i>SA</i>
Yes	87%	87%	88%	88%	84%	91%	88%	94%
No	4%	7%	2%	3%	6%	5%	3%	1%
Don't know / Not sure	8%	6%	11%	9%	10%	4%	9%	5%

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Coalition</i>	<i>Labor</i>	<i>Greens</i>	<i>One Nation</i>	<i>Other</i>
Yes	87%	88%	91%	92%	86%	75%
No	4%	5%	3%	3%	4%	7%
Don't know / Not sure	8%	7%	6%	5%	10%	19%

March 2020

Should Australia pass ‘truth in political advertising’ laws so that it is illegal for political parties and candidates to publish ads that are inaccurate and misleading?

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>QLD</i>	<i>VIC</i>	<i>WA</i>
Yes	89%	91%	88%	89%	91%	88%	89%
No	5%	5%	4%	4%	3%	5%	6%
Don't know / Not sure	6%	5%	7%	6%	6%	7%	5%

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Coalition</i>	<i>Labor</i>	<i>Greens</i>	<i>One Nation</i>	<i>Other</i>
Yes	89%	89%	90%	91%	88%	86%
No	5%	5%	4%	2%	5%	5%
Don't know / Not sure	6%	5%	5%	7%	7%	9%