

Polling - Attitudes to tax and budget priorities

May 2021

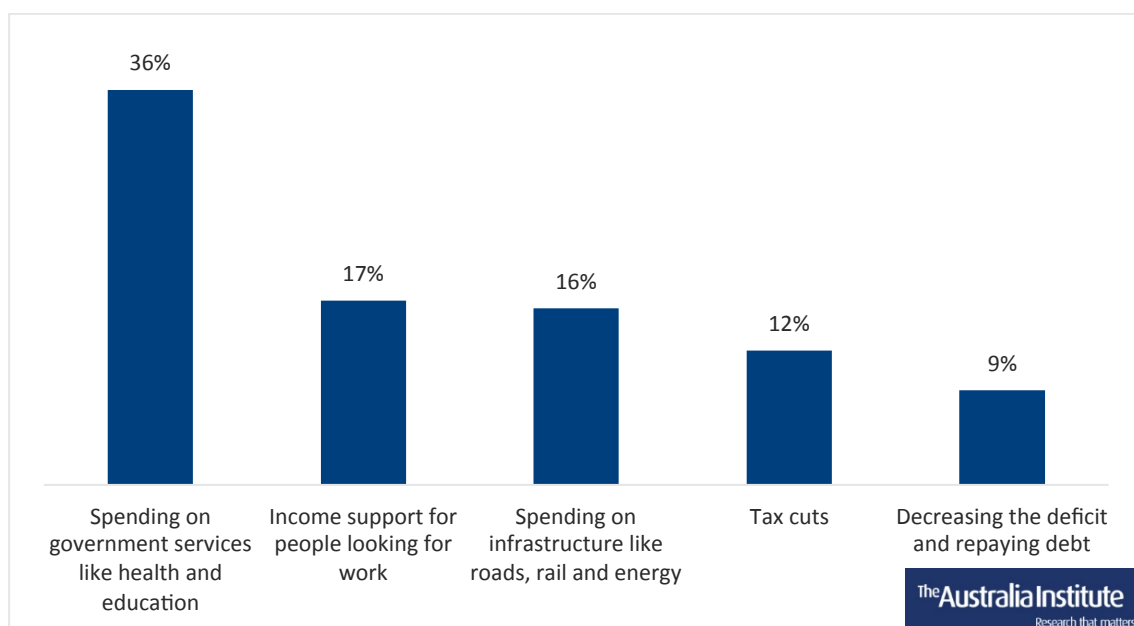
Key results

The Australia Institute surveyed a nationally representative sample of 1,000 Australians about their attitudes towards tax and budget priorities.

The results show that most Australians agree with positive statements about taxation, and would prefer additional government spending to tax cuts or deficit reduction.

- Seven in 10 (69%) Australians agree with Oliver Wendell Holmes' quote that taxes are what we pay for civilised society.
 - Three in five (61%) agree with the broader statement that tax is good.
- Spending on government services like health and education was the single most popular priority, chosen by one in three (36%) of Australians.
- Decreasing the deficit and repaying debt was the least popular, chosen by one in 10 (9%).

Figure 1: Priority for government spending

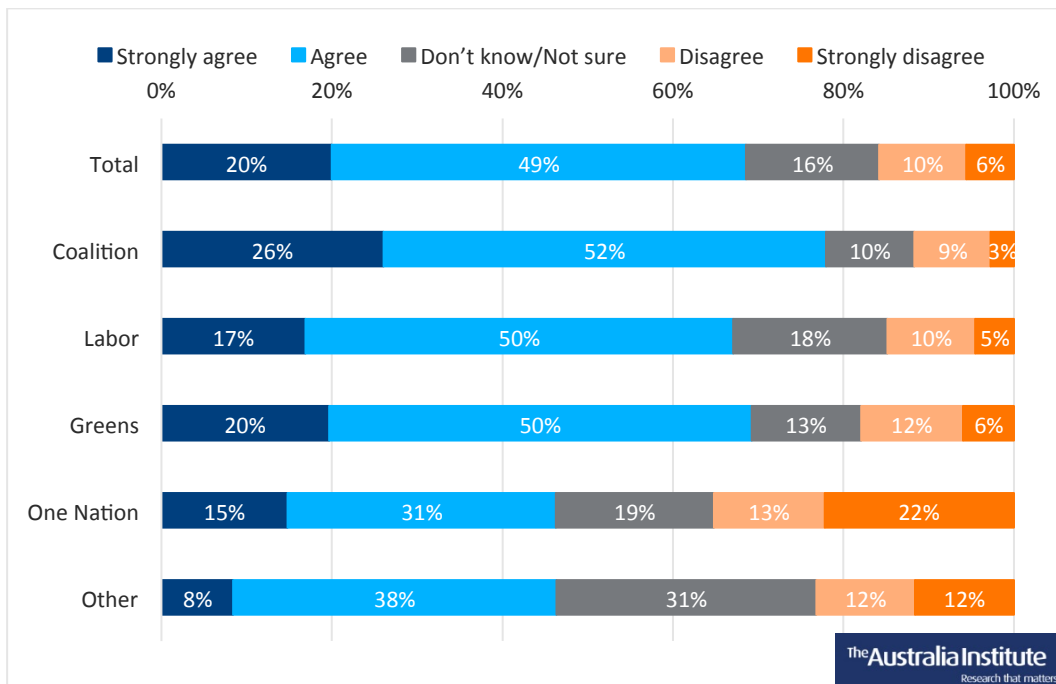


Attitudes towards tax

Respondents were asked whether they agree or disagree with the former Justice of the Supreme Court of the USA Oliver Wendell Holmes' statement "Taxes are what we pay for civilised society".

- Seven in 10 (69%) Australians agree that taxes are what we pay for civilised society, with 20% that strongly agree.
 - 16% disagree with this statement, with 6% that strongly disagree.
- Coalition voters (78%) are the mostly likely to agree that taxes are what we pay for civilised society, with 26% that strongly agree.
- The majority of Labor (67%) and Greens (69%) voters agree that taxes are what we pay for a civilised society.
- More One Nation voters agree (46%) than disagree (35%).
- More Independent/Other voters agree (46%) than disagree (23%).

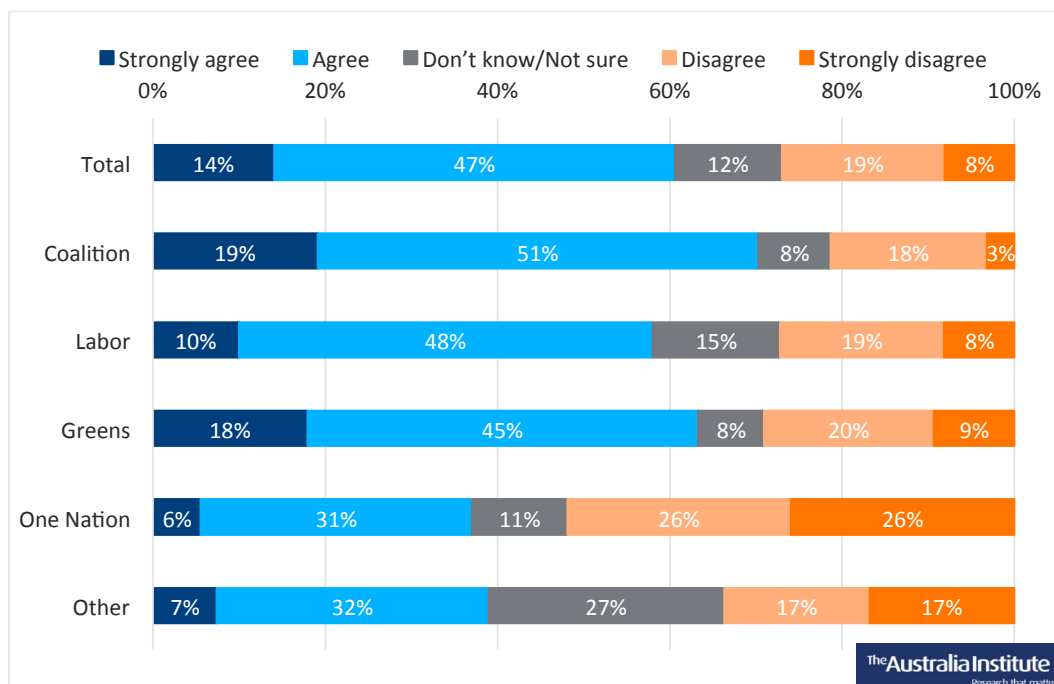
Figure 2: Attitudes towards the statement "Taxes are what we pay for civilised society"



Respondents were then asked whether they agree or disagree with the statement “tax is good”.

- Three in five (61%) of Australians agree that tax is good, with 14% that strongly agree.
 - 27% of Australians disagree that tax is good, with 8% that strongly disagree.
- Coalition voters (70%) are the most likely to agree that tax is good, with 19% that strongly agree.
 - One in five (21%) Coalition voters disagree that tax is good.
- Majority of Greens (63%) and Labor (58%) voters agree that tax is good, with 27% of Labor and 29% of Greens voters that disagree that tax is good.
- More One Nation voters disagree (52%) than agree (37%) that tax is good.
- Independent/Other votes are roughly split with 39% that agree and 34% that disagree.

Figure 3: Attitudes towards the statement “Tax is good”

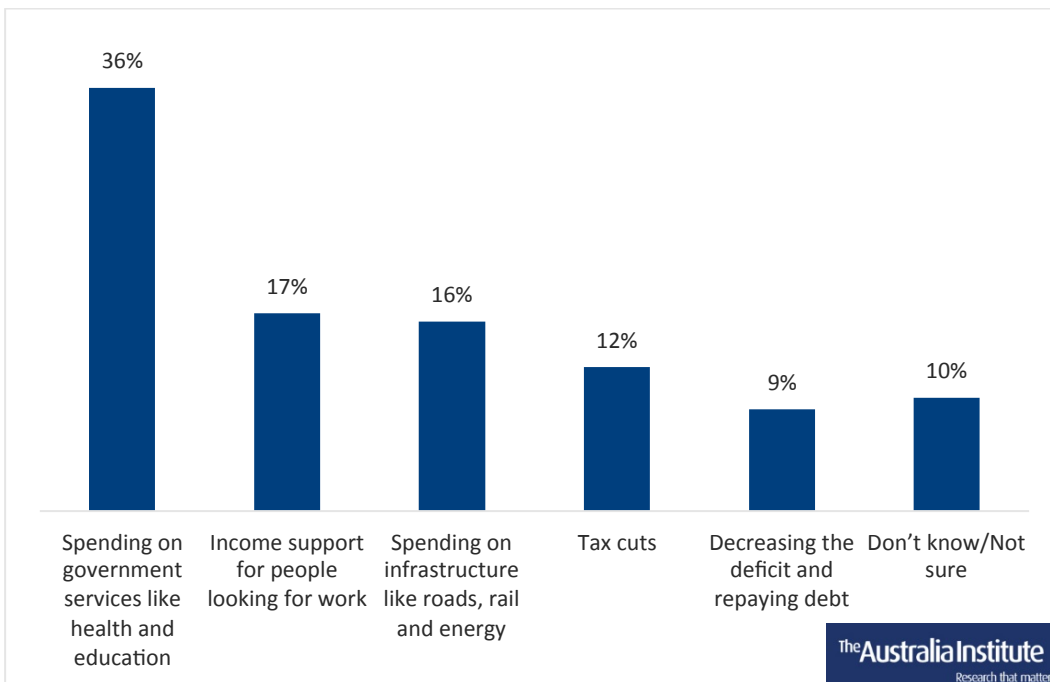


Budget priorities

Respondents were asked what they would prefer government spending to prioritise in the up-coming budget, out of spending on health and education, spending on infrastructure, income support for people looking for work, tax cuts and decreasing the deficit and repaying debt.

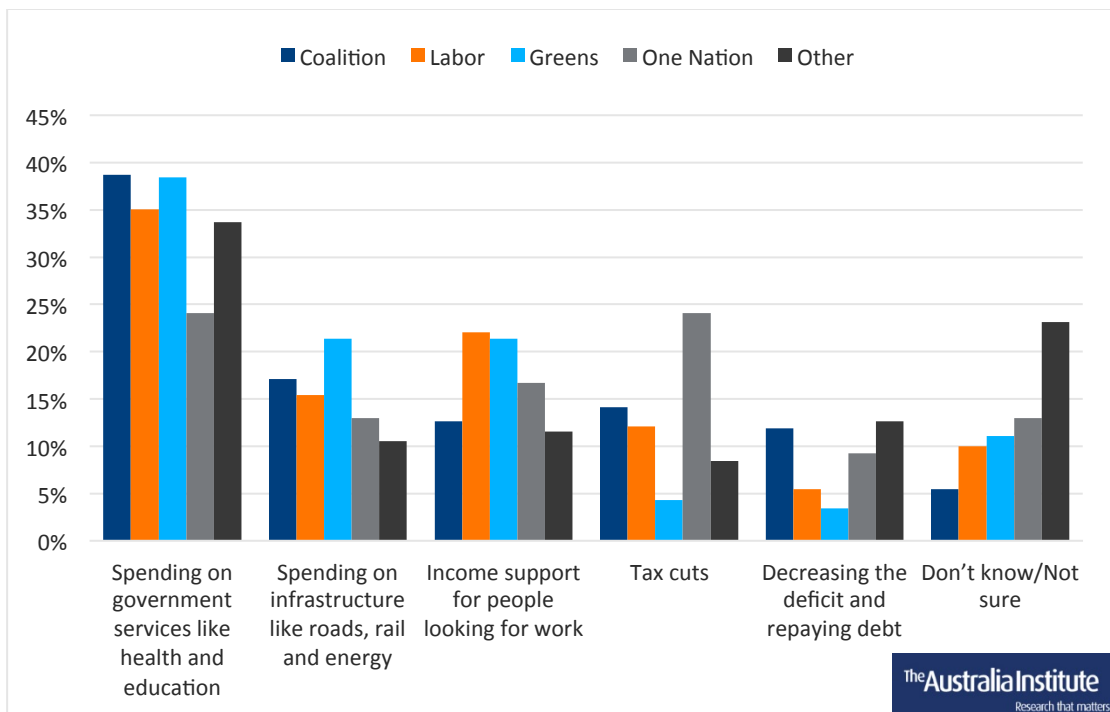
- Spending on government services like health and education was the single most popular priority, chosen by one in three (36%) of Australians.
- One in six Australians chose income support for people looking for work (17%), about the same number that chose spending on infrastructure like roads, rail and energy (16%).
- 12% of Australians would prefer the government prioritise tax cuts in the up-coming budget.
- Decreasing the deficit and repaying debt was the least popular government priority, chosen by one in 10 (9%).

Figure 4: Priority for government spending



- Spending on government services like health and education is the most preferred priority for Coalition (39%), Labor (35%), Greens (38%) and Independent/Other (34%) voters.
 - One Nation voters are evenly divided between tax cuts and spending on government services like health and education (both 24%).
- One in seven (14%) Coalition voters and one in eight (12%) Labor voters prioritise tax cuts in the up-coming budget.
- Decreasing debt and repaying deficit is the least popular priority for Coalition (12%), Labor (5%), Greens (3%) and One Nation (9%) voters.

Figure 5: Priority for government spending, by voting intention



Method

The Australia Institute surveyed 1,000 people on 6-7 May 2021, online through Dynata's Rapid Results polling, with nationally representative samples by gender, age and region.

The margin of error (95% confidence level) for the national results is 3%.

Results are shown only for larger states.

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" refers to Independent/Other.

Detailed results

What would you prefer government spending to prioritise in the up-coming budget?

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>QLD</i>	<i>VIC</i>	<i>WA</i>
Spending on government services like health and education	36%	33%	39%	38%	34%	32%	38%
Spending on infrastructure like roads, rail and energy	16%	21%	12%	16%	17%	16%	14%
Income support for people looking for work	17%	14%	20%	14%	22%	18%	12%
Tax cuts	12%	14%	11%	11%	10%	14%	18%
Decreasing the deficit and repaying debt	9%	9%	8%	10%	8%	9%	9%
Don't know/Not sure	10%	9%	10%	11%	8%	10%	8%

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Coalition</i>	<i>Labor</i>	<i>Greens</i>	<i>PHON</i>	<i>Other</i>
Spending on government services like health and education	36%	39%	35%	38%	24%	34%
Spending on infrastructure like roads, rail and energy	16%	17%	15%	21%	13%	11%
Income support for people looking for work	17%	13%	22%	21%	17%	12%
Tax cuts	12%	14%	12%	4%	24%	8%
Decreasing the deficit and repaying debt	9%	12%	5%	3%	9%	13%
Don't know/Not sure	10%	5%	10%	11%	13%	23%

Former Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes said, "Taxes are what we pay for civilised society".

Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>QLD</i>	<i>VIC</i>	<i>WA</i>
Strongly agree	20%	26%	14%	22%	22%	17%	22%
Agree	49%	49%	49%	47%	46%	50%	49%
Disagree	10%	7%	13%	11%	11%	11%	10%
Strongly disagree	6%	6%	5%	5%	6%	6%	7%
Don't know/Not sure	16%	12%	19%	16%	14%	17%	11%

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Coalition</i>	<i>Labor</i>	<i>Greens</i>	<i>PHON</i>	<i>Other</i>
Strongly agree	20%	26%	17%	20%	15%	8%
Agree	49%	52%	50%	50%	31%	38%
Disagree	10%	9%	10%	12%	13%	12%
Strongly disagree	6%	3%	5%	6%	22%	12%
Don't know/Not sure	16%	10%	18%	13%	19%	31%

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement?

“Tax is good”

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>QLD</i>	<i>VIC</i>	<i>WA</i>
Strongly agree	14%	17%	11%	17%	13%	12%	12%
Agree	47%	48%	45%	46%	43%	48%	49%
Disagree	19%	16%	22%	19%	22%	18%	15%
Strongly disagree	8%	8%	8%	7%	12%	8%	9%
Don't know/Not sure	12%	10%	14%	11%	10%	14%	13%

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Coalition</i>	<i>Labor</i>	<i>Greens</i>	<i>PHON</i>	<i>Other</i>
Strongly agree	14%	19%	10%	18%	6%	7%
Agree	47%	51%	48%	45%	31%	32%
Disagree	19%	18%	19%	20%	26%	17%
Strongly disagree	8%	3%	8%	9%	26%	17%
Don't know/Not sure	12%	8%	15%	8%	11%	27%