

Polling - Rapid Antigen Tests and COVID Planning

January 2022

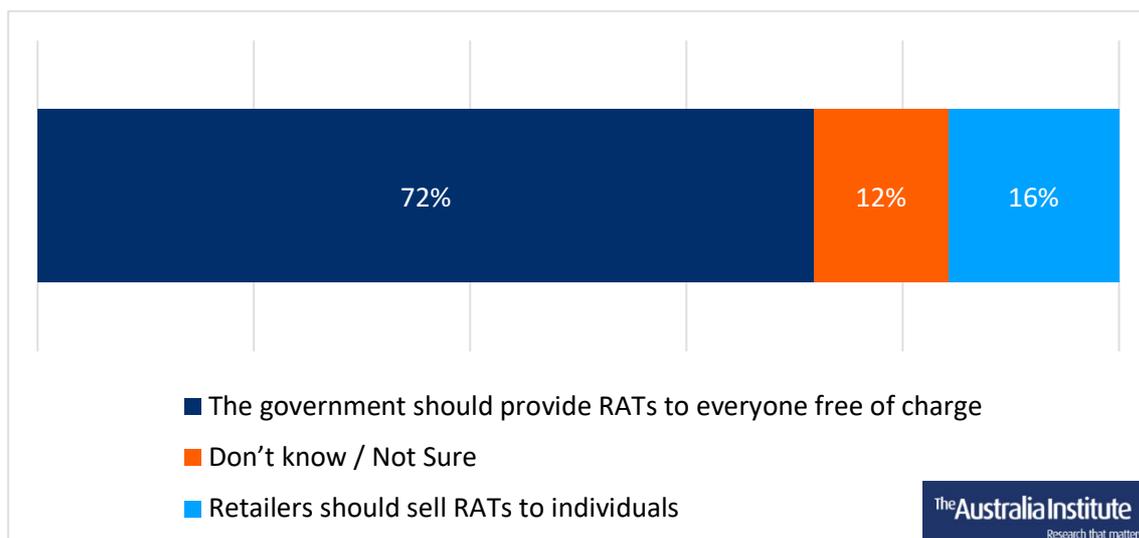
Key results

The Australia Institute surveyed a nationally representative sample of 1,000 Australians about their views on how Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs) should be made available to the public, and why some parts of Australia are experiencing problems like pressure on the public health system, supply chain issues and staffing shortages.

The results show that:

- Over seven in ten (72%) Australians believe the government should provide RATs to everyone free of charge.
 - 16% of Australians believe retailers should continue to sell RATs to individuals.
- Regarding pressure on the public health system, supply chain issues and staffing shortages, over half (53%) of Australians believe that governments failed to plan adequately over the past two years and the problems could have been avoided.
 - 33% of Australians believe that governments have planned the best they could over the past 2 years and the problems are unavoidable.

Figure 1: Preferred method of distribution of RATs

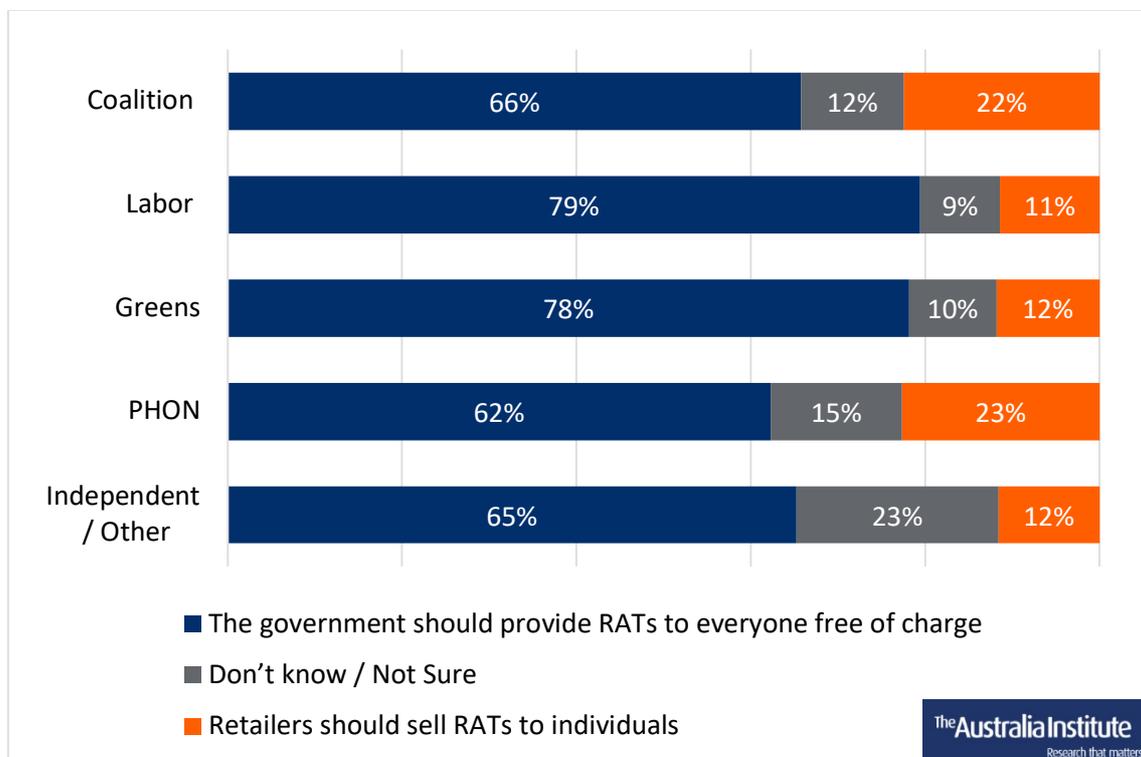


Respondents were asked about their views on how RATs should be made available to the public.

Regardless of voting intention, a clear majority of Australians believe that RATs should be distributed for free by the government, rather than sold via retailers as is currently the case.

- Almost four in five ALP and Greens voters believe that RATs should be distributed for free by the government (79% and 78% respectively).
 - Just over one in ten ALP and Greens voters believe RATs should continue to be supplied by retailers (11% and 12% respectively).
- Two-thirds (66%) of Coalition voters believe RATs should be distributed for free by the government.
 - Just over one-fifth (22%) of Coalition voters believe RATs should continue to be supplied by retailers.
- 65% of Independent/Other and 62% of One Nation voters believe that RATs should be supplied free of charge by the government.
 - 12% of Independent/Other voters and 23% of One Nation voters believe RATs should continue to be supplied by retailers.

Figure 2: Preferred method of distribution of RATs, by voting intention



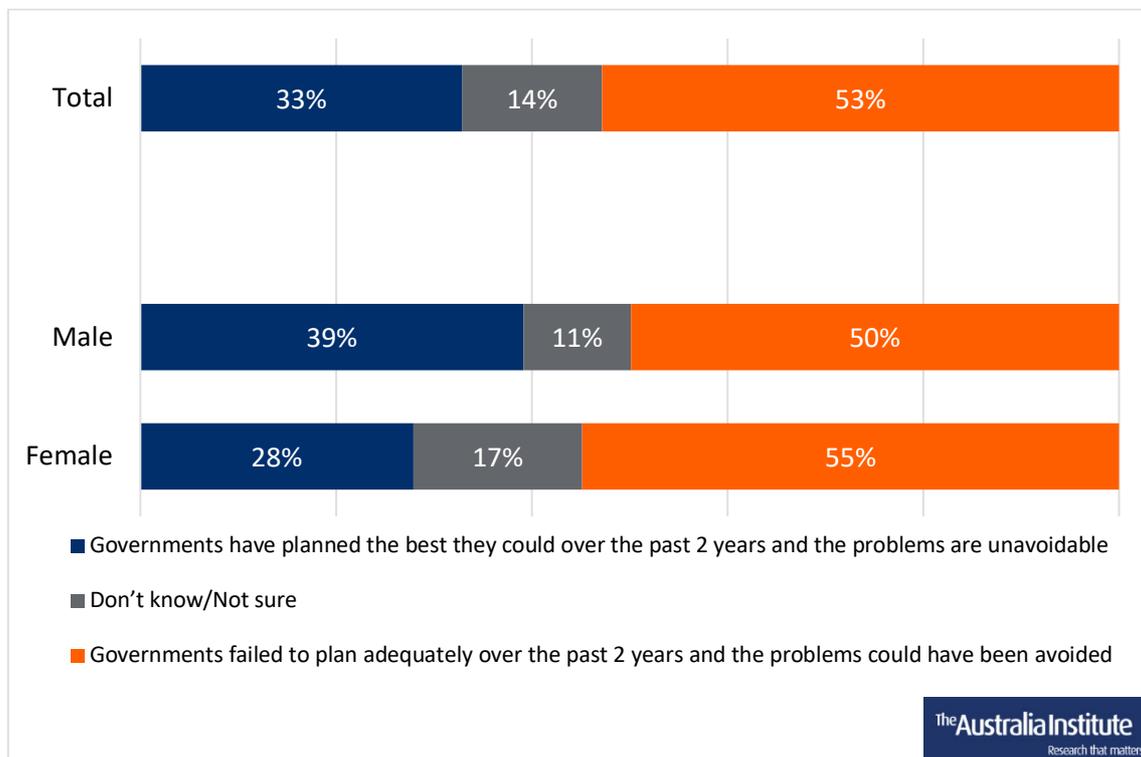
Respondents were asked about their views on the cause of problems like pressure on the public health system, supply chain issues and staffing shortages.

The majority (53%) of Australians believe the failure of government to plan adequately over the past two years is the reason parts of Australia are experiencing these problems.

A third (33%) of Australians instead believe that governments have planned the best they could over the past two years and the problems are unavoidable.

- Fewer women (28%) than men (39%) believe that governments planned as well as possible. A greater proportion of women (55%) than men (53%) believe failure of government to plan is the reason for the current problems.

Figure 3: Preferred explanation for health system pressure, supply chain issues, and staffing shortages, by gender

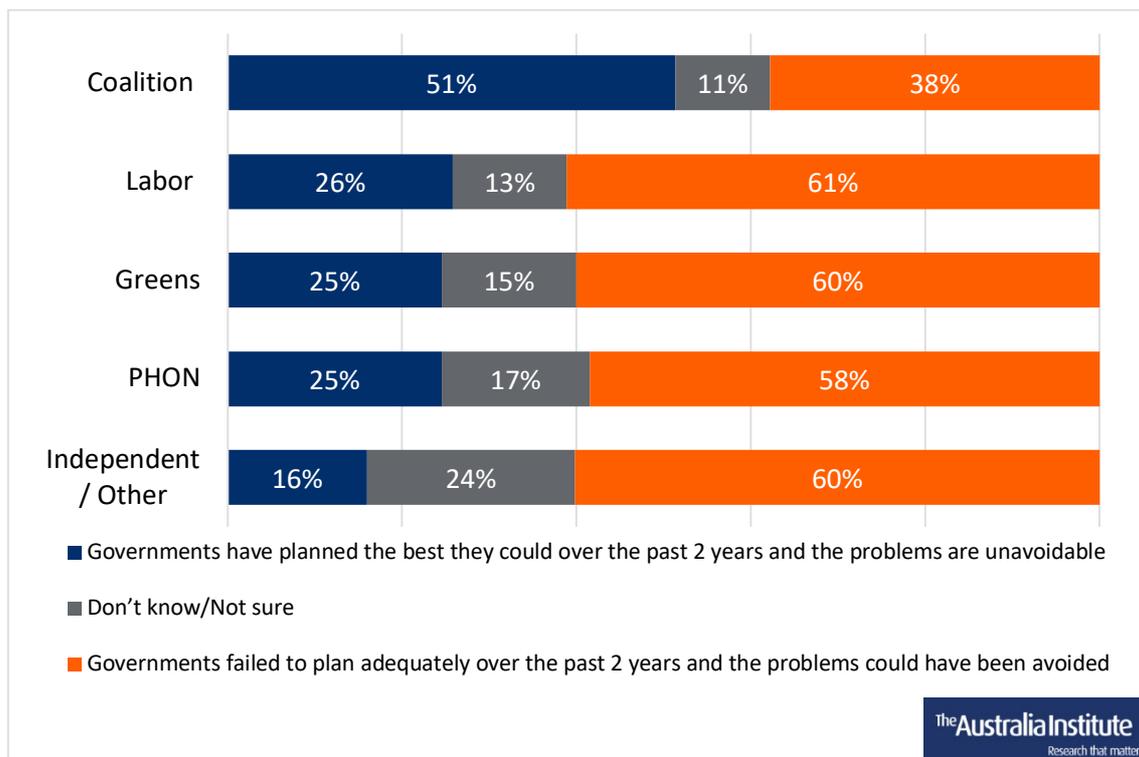


Across voting intention, there is considerable variation in response to the question regarding the cause of problems such as problems like pressure on the public health system, supply chain issues and staffing shortages.

- Three-fifths of ALP, Greens, Independent/Other and One Nation voters (61%, 60%, 60% and 58% respectively) say that governments have failed to plan adequately over the past two years.

- A quarter of ALP, Greens and One Nation voters (26%, 25% and 25% respectively) say that the problems are unavoidable.
- However, among Independent/Other voters 16% believe that governments have planned the best they could and that problems are unavoidable.
- Over half (51%) of Coalition voters believe that governments have planned as well as they could and the problems are unavoidable. Conversely, four in ten (38%) Coalition voters believe that governments have failed to plan adequately.

Figure 4: Preferred explanation for health system pressure, supply chain issues, and staffing shortages, by voting intention



- Australians 60 and over (44%) are the most likely age group to believe that governments have planned the best they could over the past two years and the problems are unavoidable.
 - 47% of the same age group believe that governments have failed to plan adequately over the past two years.

Method

The Australia Institute surveyed 1,000 adults living in Australia on 11-14 January 2021, online through Dynata's panel, with nationally representative samples by gender, age and region.

The results were weighted by three variables (gender x age group x state/territory) based on the latest Australian Bureau of Statistics data, using the raking method. This resulted in an effective sample size of 970.

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

Results are shown only for larger states.

Voting intention questions appeared just after the initial demographic questions, before policy questions. Lower house voting intention was asked first, followed by upper house voting intention.

Respondents who answered "Don't know / Not sure" for voting intention questions were then asked a leaning question.

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

The preceding questions in the poll concerned demographic information, federal voting intention, the powers of the Senate, and principles of proportional representation, none of which are expected to influence the results of the question on RATs and government Covid preparedness.

The only preceding question which may potentially influence results of the question on government COVID planning is: “Which level of Government do you think is doing a better job of handling the COVID-19 crisis?”

Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs) are COVID-19 tests that can be self-administered. They are currently sold by retailers.

Which is closest to your personal view on how Rapid Antigen Tests should be made available to the public?

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>VIC</i>	<i>QLD</i>	<i>WA</i>
The government should provide RATs to everyone free of charge	72%	69%	74%	68%	73%	75%	67%
Retailers should sell RATs to individuals	16%	20%	13%	20%	14%	15%	12%
Don't know / Not Sure	12%	11%	14%	12%	13%	10%	21%

	<i>Total</i>	<i>18-29</i>	<i>30-39</i>	<i>40-49</i>	<i>50-59</i>	<i>60+</i>
The government should provide RATs to everyone free of charge	72%	70%	71%	68%	76%	74%
Retailers should sell RATs to individuals	16%	15%	19%	16%	14%	15%
Don't know / Not Sure	12%	15%	11%	15%	10%	11%

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Coalition</i>	<i>Labor</i>	<i>Greens</i>	<i>PHON</i>	<i>Other</i>
The government should provide RATs to everyone free of charge	72%	66%	79%	78%	62%	65%
Retailers should sell RATs to individuals	16%	22%	11%	12%	23%	12%
Don't know / Not Sure	12%	12%	9%	10%	15%	23%

Due to the increasing number of COVID-19 cases, some parts of Australia are currently experiencing problems like pressure on the public health system, supply chain issues and staffing shortages.

Which of the following is closest to your personal view about the reason some parts of Australia are experiencing problems?

	Total	Male	Female	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA
Governments have planned the best they could over the past 2 years and the problems are unavoidable	33%	39%	28%	33%	31%	35%	34%
Governments failed to plan adequately over the past 2 years and the problems could have been avoided	53%	50%	55%	55%	52%	51%	52%
Don't know/Not sure	14%	11%	17%	11%	17%	14%	14%

	Total	18-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+
Governments have planned the best they could over the past 2 years and the problems are unavoidable	33%	29%	31%	29%	31%	44%
Governments failed to plan adequately over the past 2 years and the problems could have been avoided	53%	55%	55%	53%	55%	47%
Don't know/Not sure	14%	16%	14%	18%	14%	9%

	Total	Coalition	Labor	Greens	One Nation	Other
Governments have planned the best they could over the past 2 years and the problems are unavoidable	33%	51%	26%	25%	25%	16%
Governments failed to plan adequately over the past 2 years and the problems could have been avoided	53%	38%	61%	60%	58%	60%
Don't know/Not sure	14%	11%	13%	15%	17%	24%