

Polling - ABC funding, independence, and democracy

February 2022

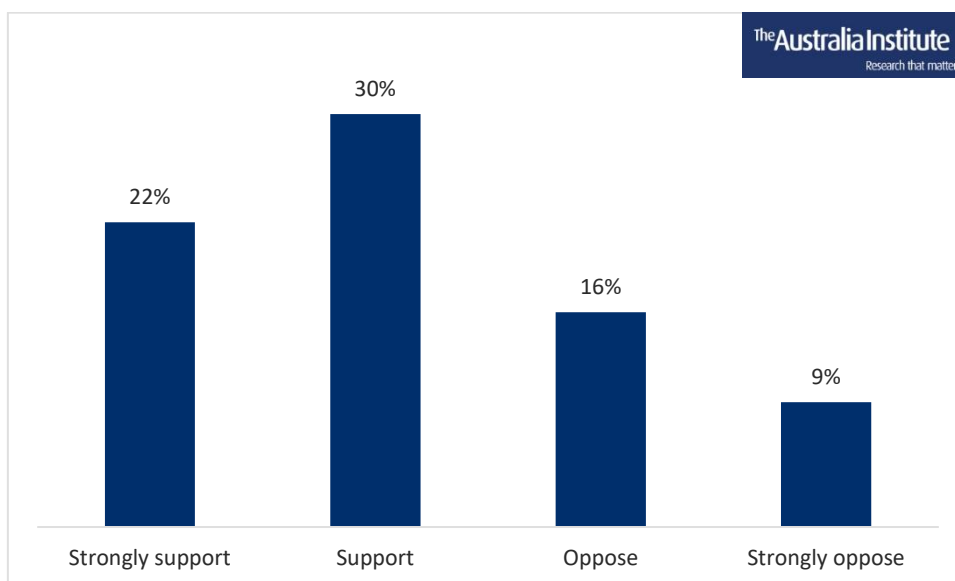
Key results

The Australia Institute surveyed a nationally representative sample of 1,000 Australians about ABC funding and the importance of the ABC to a healthy democracy.

The results show that

- Just over half (52%) of Australians support restoring \$84 million in funding to the ABC, with 25% that oppose.
- Almost two in three (65%) Greens voters and 63% of Labor voters support restoring funding to the ABC, followed by 43% of Coalition voters, 38% of Independent/Other voters and 31% of One Nation voters.
 - 36% of Coalition voters oppose, followed by 31% of One Nation voters, 21% of Independent/Other voters, 17% of Labor voters and 16% of Greens voters.
- Three in five (61%) Australians agree that a strong, independent ABC is critical to a healthy democracy, with 25% that strongly agree.
 - 19% of Australians disagree with the statement.

Figure 1: Attitudes towards restoring ABC funding

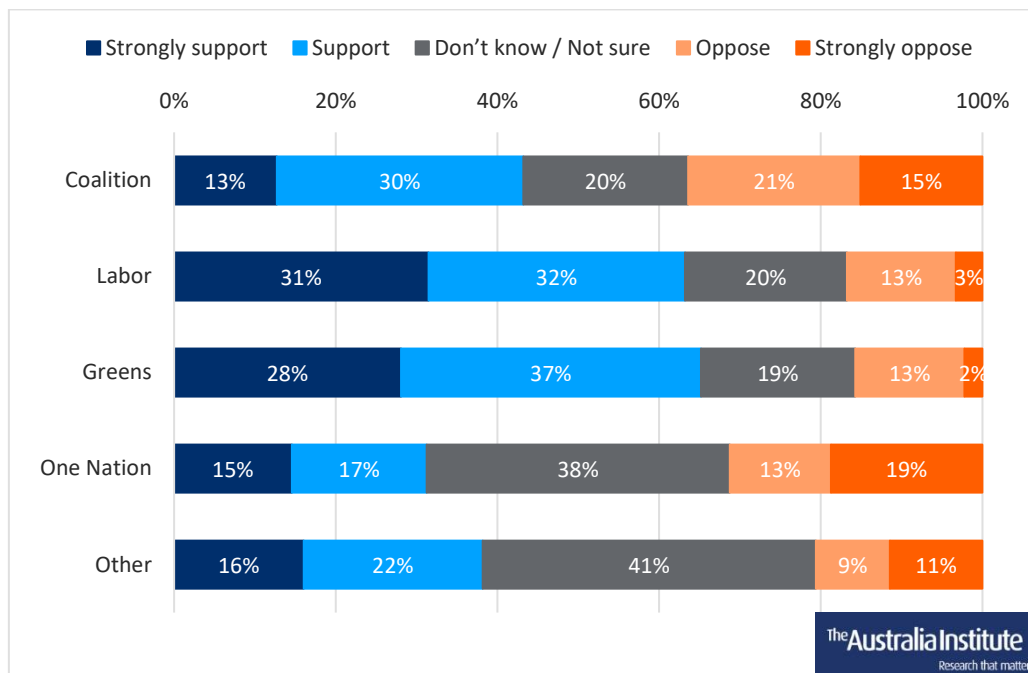


ABC funding

Respondents were told that, over recent years, \$84 million has been cut from the operational budget of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, the ABC. This refers to the three-year indexation freeze announced in 2018.¹ Respondents were asked whether they support or oppose restoring this funding to the ABC.

- Over half (52%) of Australians support restoring funding to the ABC, with 25% that oppose.
- Almost two in three (65%) Greens voters and 63% of Labor voters support restoring funding to the ABC, with 28% and 31% that strongly support respectively.
 - 17% of Labor voters and 16% of Greens voters oppose.
- Over two in five (43%) Coalition voters support restoring funding to the ABC, more than the 36% that oppose.
- 38% of Independent/Other voters support restoring funding to the ABC, with 21% that oppose.
- One Nation voters are evenly split (31% support, 31% oppose).

Figure 2: Attitudes towards restoring ABC funding, by voting intention



¹ Wake and Ward (2020) *Latest \$84 million cuts rip the heart out of the ABC, and our democracy*, <https://theconversation.com/latest-84-million-cuts-rip-the-heart-out-of-the-abc-and-our-democracy-141355>; Meade and Keneally (2018) *ABC funding slashed by \$84m in budget to help broadcaster 'live within their means'*, <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/may/08/abc-funding-slashed-by-84m-in-budget-to-help-broadcaster-live-within-their-means>

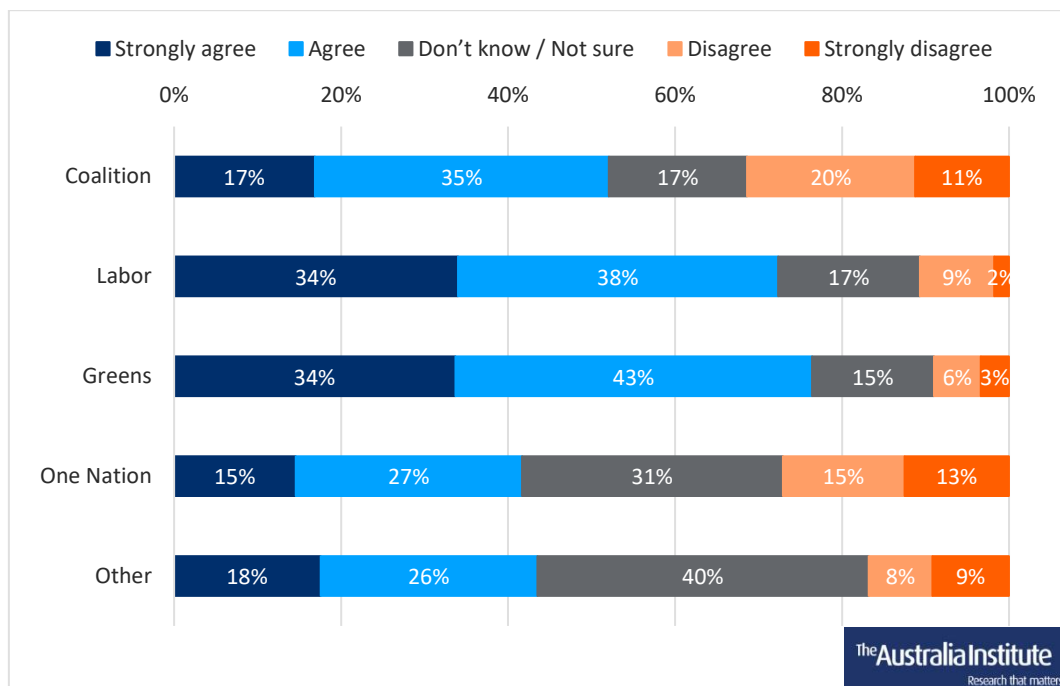
- Among residents of the larger states, Victorians and NSW residents are most likely to support restoring funding to the ABC, 57% and 54% respectively.
 - 24% of NSW residents and 23% of Victorians oppose.
- Half of Western Australians (49%) and over two in five Queenslanders (44%) support restoring funding to the ABC.
 - 23% of Western Australians and 29% of Queenslanders oppose.

ABC independence and democracy

Respondents were asked whether agree or disagree with the statement “A strong, independent ABC is critical to a healthy democracy”.

- Three in five (61%) Australians agree that a strong, independent ABC is critical to a healthy democracy, with 25% that strongly agree.
 - 19% of Australians disagree with the statement.
- Among all voting intentions, more agree than disagree that the ABC is critical to a healthy democracy.
- Greens voters are most likely to agree that the ABC is critical to a healthy democracy, 76%, followed by 72% of Labor voters.
- Over half of Coalition voters agree that the ABC is critical to a healthy democracy 52%, with 31% that disagree.
- 44% of Independent/Other voters and 42% of One Nation voters agree that the ABC is critical to a healthy democracy.
 - 27% of One Nation and 17% of Independent/Other voters disagree.

Figure 3: Attitudes on the importance of the ABC to democracy



Method

The Australia Institute surveyed 1,000 adults living in Australia on 25 to 28 January 2022, 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 911.

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.

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, government handling of COVID-19, availability of RATs, Senate procedure and trust in government, none of which are expected to influence the results of the questions on the ABC.

Over recent years, \$84 million has been cut from the operational budget of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, the ABC.

Would you support or oppose restoring that funding to the ABC?

	Total	Male	Female	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA
Strongly support	22%	29%	16%	23%	23%	20%	17%
Support	30%	30%	30%	30%	34%	25%	31%
Oppose	16%	13%	18%	15%	14%	16%	15%
Strongly oppose	9%	11%	7%	9%	9%	13%	8%
Don't know / Not sure	24%	18%	29%	23%	20%	27%	28%

	Total	18-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+
Strongly support	22%	15%	20%	22%	25%	26%
Support	30%	36%	33%	32%	27%	25%
Oppose	16%	17%	16%	16%	13%	16%
Strongly oppose	9%	4%	10%	6%	12%	11%
Don't know / Not sure	24%	28%	22%	25%	24%	22%

	Total	Coalition	Labor	Greens	PHON	Other
Strongly support	22%	13%	31%	28%	15%	16%
Support	30%	30%	32%	37%	17%	22%
Oppose	16%	21%	13%	13%	13%	9%
Strongly oppose	9%	15%	3%	2%	19%	11%
Don't know / Not sure	24%	20%	20%	19%	38%	41%

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

“A strong, independent ABC is critical to a healthy democracy.”

	<i>Total</i>	Male	Female	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA
Strongly support	25%	31%	20%	27%	25%	22%	23%
Support	36%	38%	34%	33%	40%	33%	40%
Oppose	13%	11%	14%	13%	14%	12%	8%
Strongly oppose	7%	8%	6%	6%	7%	9%	8%
Don't know / Not sure	20%	12%	27%	21%	14%	25%	21%

	<i>Total</i>	18-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+
Strongly support	25%	13%	21%	24%	29%	33%
Support	36%	39%	38%	36%	34%	32%
Oppose	13%	10%	17%	12%	9%	13%
Strongly oppose	7%	7%	5%	6%	9%	6%
Don't know / Not sure	20%	31%	18%	22%	19%	15%

	<i>Total</i>	Coalition	Labor	Greens	PHON	Other
Strongly support	25%	17%	34%	34%	15%	18%
Support	36%	35%	38%	43%	27%	26%
Oppose	13%	20%	9%	6%	15%	8%
Strongly oppose	7%	11%	2%	3%	13%	9%
Don't know / Not sure	20%	17%	17%	15%	31%	40%