

# Polling - Funding Australia’s nuclear submarines

*March 2023*

## Key results

The Australia Institute surveyed a nationally representative sample of 1,002 Australians about the plan to purchase nuclear-powered submarines.

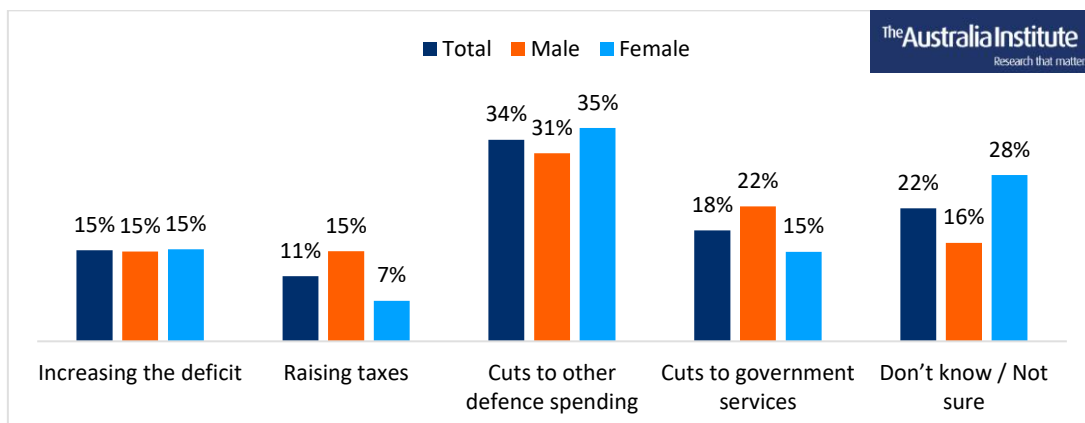
The results show that Australians are not clear about how the submarine program should be funded.

Respondents were told that the Albanese Government and the Dutton Opposition have committed to building nuclear submarines, at an estimated cost of between \$268 billion and \$368 billion.

They were then asked how the nuclear submarines should primarily be paid for, between cuts to other defence spending, cuts to government services, increasing the deficit and raising taxes.

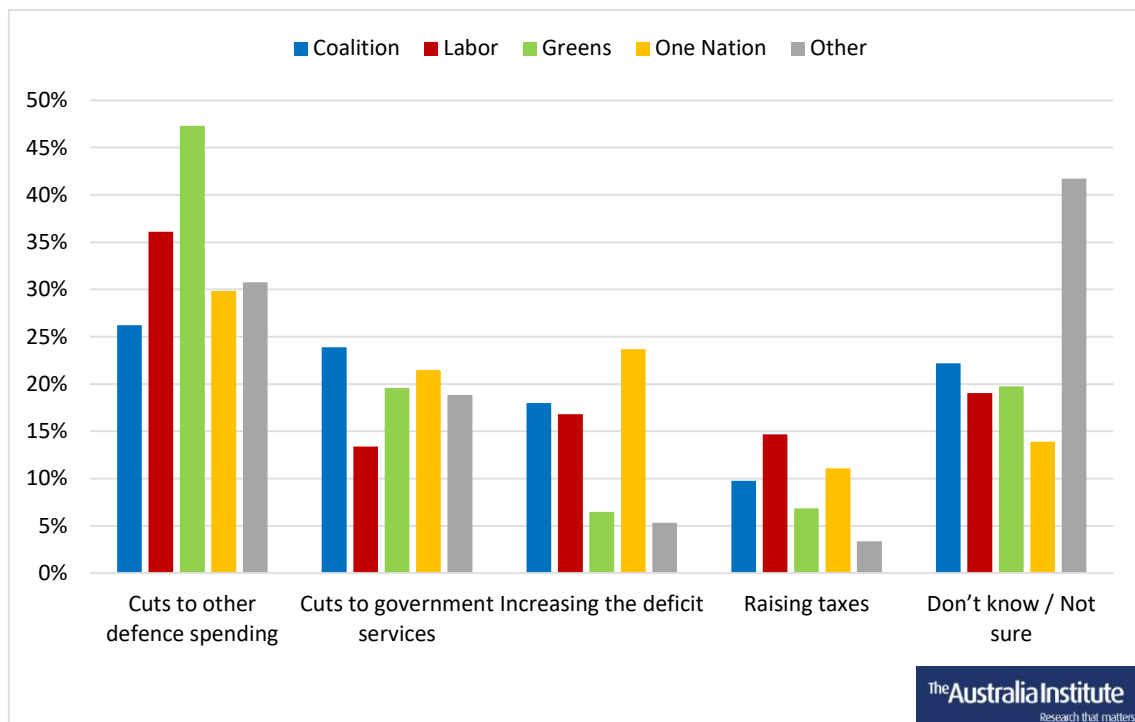
- No method for paying for the nuclear submarines was chosen by the majority of respondents.
- The single most popular option was for it be funded through cuts to other defence spending, chosen by one in three (34%).

**Figure 1: How nuclear submarines should primarily be paid for, by gender**



- 18% of respondents chose cuts to government services, 15% chose increasing the deficit and 11% chose raising taxes as the primary method of paying for the nuclear submarines.
- One in five respondents (22%) said they did not know or were not sure how the nuclear submarines should be paid for.
  - Women were twice as likely as men to say they did not know how the nuclear submarines should be paid for (28% vs 16%).
- No method for paying for the nuclear submarines received majority support across any voting intention.
- Cuts to other defence spending was the single most popular option for paying for the nuclear submarines across every voting intention (47% for Greens, 36% for Labor, 30% for One Nation, 31% for Independent/Other and 26% for Coalition).
- Cuts to government services was the least popular funding option among Labor voters (13%), increasing the deficit was the least popular among Greens voters (6%) and raising taxes was the least popular among Coalition, One Nation and Independent/Other voters (10%, 11% and 3% respectively).

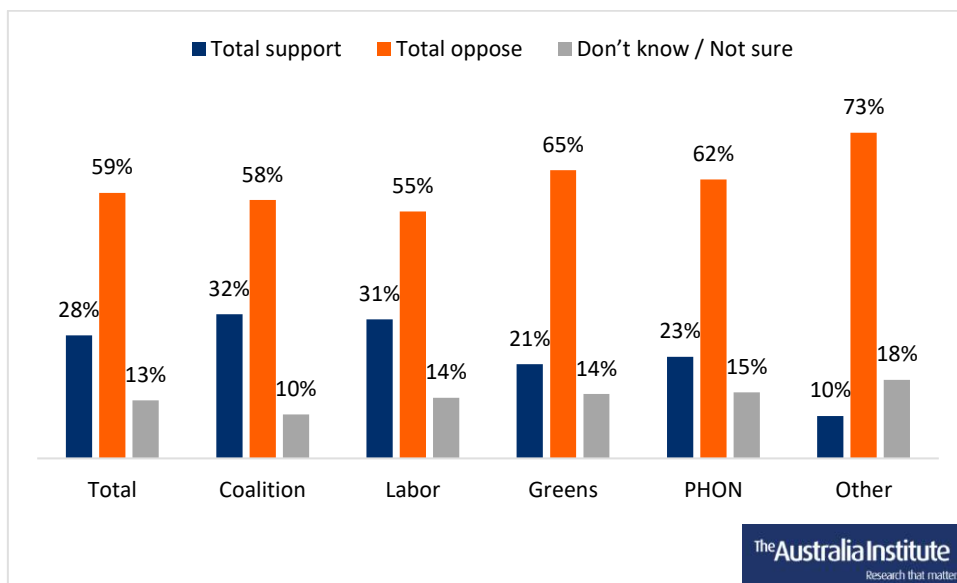
**Figure 2: How nuclear submarines should primarily be paid for, by voting intention**



Respondents were then asked if they would support or oppose an increase in taxes to help pay for Australia’s fleet of nuclear submarines.

- Three in five Australians (59%) oppose an increase in taxes to help pay for nuclear submarines, twice as many as support an increase in taxes (28%).
- Across all voting intentions, a majority (55%–73%) oppose an increase in taxes to help pay for nuclear submarines.
- There was little difference between Labor and Coalition voters in level of support for an increase in taxes to help pay for nuclear submarines (31% and 32% respectively).

**Figure 3: Increase in taxes to help pay for nuclear submarines**



## Method

Between 14 to 17 March 2023, The Australia Institute surveyed 1,002 adults living in Australia, online through Dynata’s panel, with nationally representative samples by gender, age group and state/territory.

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.

The research is compliant with the [Australian Polling Council Quality Mark standards](#). The long methodology disclosure statement follows.

### Long disclosure statement

The results were weighted by three variables (gender, age group and state or territory) based on Australian Bureau of Statistics [“National, state and territory population”](#) data, using the raking method. Those who answered the gender identity question as “Non-binary”, “I use a different term”, or “Prefer not to answer” had their responses included with females for the purpose of reporting, due to constraints from weighting data availability. This resulted in an effective sample size of 932.

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

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 were then asked a leaning question; these leanings are included in voting intention crosstabs. “Coalition” includes separate responses for Liberal and National. “Other” refers to Independent/Other, and minor parties in cases where they were included in the voting intention but represent too small a sample to be reported separately in the crosstabs.



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## Detailed results

Preceding questions in the poll are expected to have influenced the results of the questions published here. The questions, and the response options for each question, are as follows:

### **Would you support or oppose the Labor Government repealing the Stage 3 income tax cuts?**

- Strongly support
- Support
- Oppose
- Strongly oppose
- Don't know / Not sure

### **Who do you think will benefit the most from the Stage 3 income tax cuts?**

- High income earners
- Middle income earners
- Low income earners
- Don't know/Not sure

**The Stage 3 income tax cuts will cost the budget more than \$240 billion over the next 10 years and will mostly benefit high income earners.**

**Some have called for the Labor Government to repeal the Stage 3 income tax cuts because economic circumstances have changed since they were legislated. During the election Labor committed to keep the tax cuts.**

### **Which do you think is more important?**

- Keeping an election promise regardless of how economic circumstances have changed
- Adapting economic policy to suit the changing circumstances even if that means breaking an election promise
- Don't know / Not sure

### **Which is better for Australia's long term national interests?**

- Increased defence spending
- Proceeding with the Stage 3 income tax cuts
- Increased spending on governments services like health and education
- Don't know / Not sure

The Federal Government has made commitments to expand aged care, childcare, the NDIS and defence.

How should they fund this expansion of services?

- Run a larger budget deficit
- Cut spending on other public services
- Collect more tax revenue
- Don't know / Not sure

The Albanese Government and the Dutton Opposition have committed to building nuclear submarines, at an estimated cost of between \$268 billion and \$368 billion.

How should the nuclear submarines primarily be paid for?

Response options were presented in random order.

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>VIC</i>	<i>QLD</i>	<i>WA</i>
<b>Increasing the deficit</b>	15%	15%	15%	16%	11%	18%	11%
<b>Raising taxes</b>	11%	15%	7%	14%	9%	6%	18%
<b>Cuts to other defence spending</b>	34%	31%	35%	36%	34%	32%	25%
<b>Cuts to government services</b>	18%	22%	15%	18%	22%	18%	23%
<b>Don't know / Not sure</b>	22%	16%	28%	17%	24%	26%	23%

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Coalition</i>	<i>Labor</i>	<i>Greens</i>	<i>PHON</i>	<i>Other</i>
<b>Increasing the deficit</b>	15%	18%	17%	6%	24%	5%
<b>Raising taxes</b>	11%	10%	15%	7%	11%	3%
<b>Cuts to other defence spending</b>	34%	26%	36%	47%	30%	31%
<b>Cuts to government services</b>	18%	24%	13%	20%	21%	19%
<b>Don't know / Not sure</b>	22%	22%	19%	20%	14%	42%

Would you support or oppose an increase in taxes to help pay for Australia's fleet of nuclear submarines?

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>VIC</i>	<i>QLD</i>	<i>WA</i>
<b>Strongly support</b>	7%	9%	5%	8%	8%	6%	5%
<b>Support</b>	20%	29%	12%	25%	16%	18%	20%
<b>Oppose</b>	29%	26%	32%	28%	33%	24%	31%
<b>Strongly oppose</b>	31%	26%	34%	27%	31%	36%	32%
<b>Don't know / Not sure</b>	13%	10%	16%	13%	11%	16%	12%

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Coalition</i>	<i>Labor</i>	<i>Greens</i>	<i>PHON</i>	<i>Other</i>
<b>Strongly support</b>	7%	7%	8%	6%	7%	5%
<b>Support</b>	20%	25%	23%	15%	16%	5%
<b>Oppose</b>	29%	34%	28%	31%	18%	21%
<b>Strongly oppose</b>	31%	24%	28%	33%	44%	52%
<b>Don't know / Not sure</b>	13%	10%	14%	14%	15%	18%