Polling – Consultancies, donation reform, and trusted policy advice
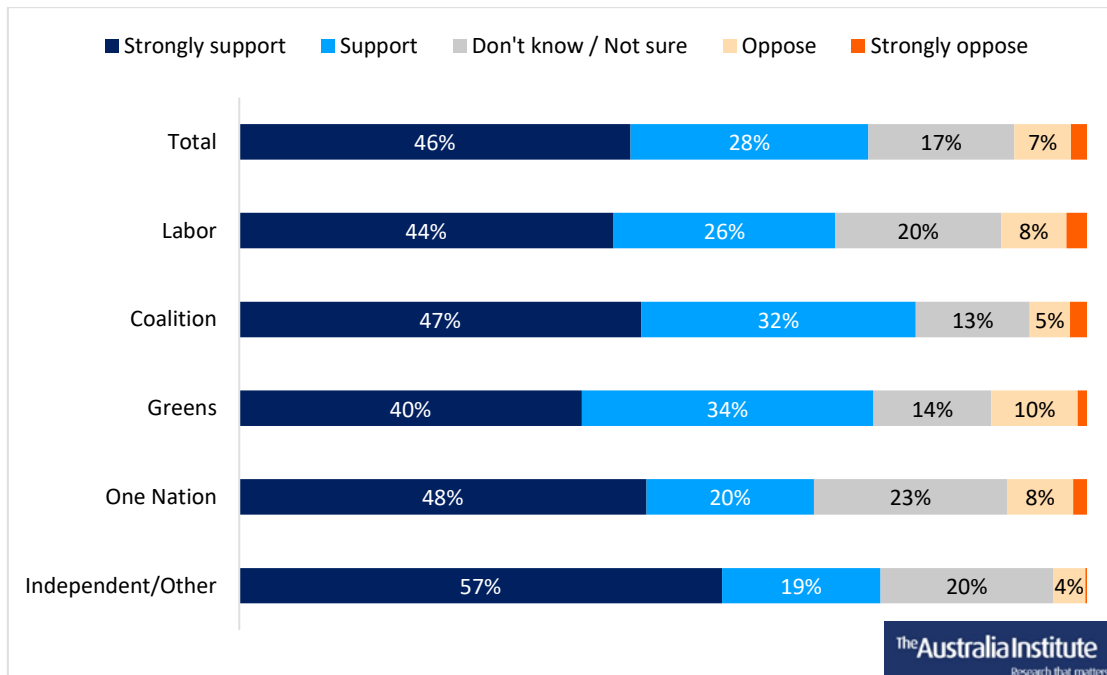
August 2023

Key results

The Australia Institute surveyed a sample of 1,501 Australians about their attitudes towards consultancies, donation reform, and who they trust to provide policy advice to the government.

The results show that:

- Three in every four Australians (74%) support banning political donations from organisations that receive funding from government contracts, including 80% of Coalition voters, 70% of Labor voters, and 75% of Greens voters.
- When asked who they trust more to provide policy advice to the government that is in the public interest, nearly half of Australians (46%) nominate the Australian Public Service while one in five Australians (21%) nominate private consultancies.

Figure 1: Banning donations from organisations that receive government contracts

Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the statement "Any organisation that receives funding from government contracts should be banned from making political donations".
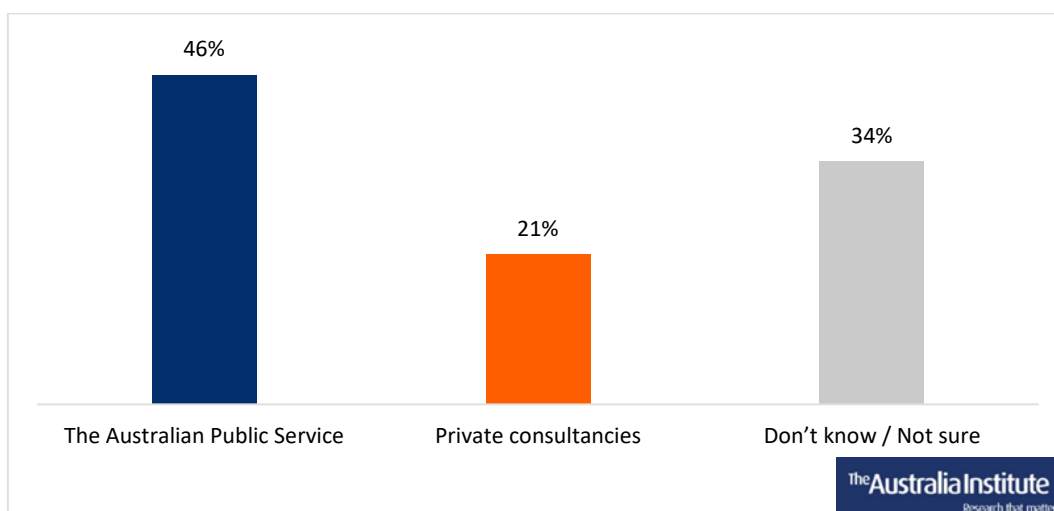
- Three in every four Australians (74%) support banning political donations from organisations that receive funding from government contracts.
- Just under half of Australians (46%) strongly support banning organisations that receive funding from government contracts from making political donations.
- One in ten Australians (9%) oppose banning organisations that receive funding from government contracts from making political donations.
- Around one in six Australians (17%) did not know or were not sure whether organisations that receive funding from government contracts should be banned from making political donations.

Respondents were then asked who they trust more to provide policy advice to government that is in the public interest.

- Just under half of Australians (46%) nominate the Australian Public Service as the organisation they trust more to provide policy advice to government that is in the public interest, whereas one in four Australians (21%) nominate private consultancies as the organisation they trust more to provide policy advice to government that is in the public interest.

Around one in three Australians (34%) answered "Don't know / Not sure", an unusually high result. This suggests that this is not a question that many Australians have engaged with.

Figure 2: Most trusted to provide policy advice to government

Method

Between 1 and 4 August 2023, The Australia Institute surveyed 1501 adults living in Australia, online through Dynata's panel, with nationally representative samples by gender, age group and state/territory. South Australia and Queensland were "over-sampled" to produce more precise results, but weighting was used to ensure that people from these states were not over-represented in national results.

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 1169.

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 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.

Detailed results

No preceding questions in the poll are expected to have influenced the results of the questions published here.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

"Any organisation that receives funding from government contracts should be banned from making political donations."

	Total	Labor	Coalition	Greens	PHON	Other
Strongly support	46%	44%	47%	40%	48%	57%
Support	28%	26%	32%	34%	20%	19%
Oppose	7%	8%	5%	10%	8%	4%
Strongly oppose	2%	2%	2%	1%	2%	0%
Don't know / Not sure	17%	20%	13%	14%	23%	20%

	Total	Male	Female	18-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+
Strongly support	46%	54%	39%	40%	38%	40%	46%	60%
Support	28%	28%	28%	32%	33%	25%	27%	25%
Oppose	7%	6%	7%	12%	5%	9%	7%	2%
Strongly oppose	2%	1%	2%	3%	3%	4%	1%	0%
Don't know / Not sure	17%	11%	23%	13%	21%	23%	20%	13%

	Total	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA
Strongly support	46%	47%	43%	51%	45%
Support	28%	28%	29%	26%	31%
Oppose	7%	6%	10%	5%	5%
Strongly oppose	2%	2%	1%	1%	2%
Don't know / Not sure	17%	18%	18%	17%	17%

Who do you trust more to provide policy advice to government that is in the public interest?

	Total	Labor	Coalition	Greens	PHON	Other
The Australian Public Service	*46%*	52%	41%	50%	29%	36%
Private consultancies	*21%*	17%	26%	17%	27%	18%
Don't know / Not sure	*34%*	30%	33%	33%	44%	46%

	Total	Male	Female	18-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+
The Australian Public Service	*46%*	52%	39%	51%	50%	50%	41%	38%
Private consultancies	*21%*	21%	21%	28%	21%	14%	20%	20%
Don't know / Not sure	*34%*	26%	41%	21%	29%	36%	39%	41%

	Total	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA
The Australian Public Service	*46%*	48%	45%	42%	50%
Private consultancies	*21%*	20%	20%	23%	19%
Don't know / Not sure	*34%*	32%	35%	35%	31%