Australia's Comparative Advantage:

Public Preference Study

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This report describes the findings and methodology of the *Australia's Comparative Advantage (ACA) Public Preference Study* conducted in February 2015 on behalf of the Australian Council of Learned Academies (ACOLA). This Public Preference Study is one component of the overall ACA research programme. The Public Preference Study was conducted to provide information on Australian citizen attitudes to and perceptions of government's public policy reform, public expenditure levels, and desired personal expenditure allocation and outcomes.

The ACA Public Preference study was conducted via computer assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) using dual frame (mobile and landline) random digit dialling. In total, 750 interviews were conducted with Australian citizens aged 18 years and over. Of all sample phone numbers that were initiated, an interview was achieved with 11.1% (26.2% response rate – interviews as a proportion of interviews and refusals).

Allocation of government spending

Public perceptions of government spending are an important area of this study. Respondents were asked a series of questions to gauge their opinion of government spending across a range of different areas. Specifically respondents were asked if they felt that governments should spend 'more' or 'less' in each area that government currently funds through taxes.

The key points to note are:

- Over three in four believed that governments should spend more on Health (77%) and Schooling (76%).
- Approximately one in three believed that they should spend less on Defence (33%) and General public services (32%).
- Significantly more of those who completed up to Year 12 believed that governments should spend more across most areas compared to those who were University educated.

When asked to nominate dollar values for how much they would be prepared to pay in taxes, the average nominated allocations were generally in line with the current distribution across most categories. That said, some larger differences were identified for select areas of government spending and some differences based on age and education were found.

The key points to note are:

- The biggest differences were observed for Other social security and welfare (2.7% decrease), General public services (1.2% decrease), Schooling (0.9% increase), and Social security for seniors (0.8% increase).
- Those aged 35 to 54 nominated a significantly higher proportion (12.0%) of their taxes to Social security for seniors compared to those aged 18 to 34 (10.6%).
- Respondents with a University qualification allocated a greater proportion to Schooling (9.5%) and to Tertiary education (8.9%) compared to those whose highest education level was Year 12 or below (8.6% and 7.7% respectively).

While the average proportion nominated for each area of government spending was relatively similar to the current allocation, there was significant variance in the level of increase or decrease provided by each respondent. More than half of the respondents (56%) nominated a dollar value which was at least a 10% decrease from the amount presented for General public services. In addition, more than half the respondents nominated a value which was at least a 10% increase on the amount presented for Schooling (61%), Social security for seniors (55%), Public order and safety (53%), and Transport and communications (51%).

When the total nominated dollar value was compared to the current total tax payable (according to income group) the implied change was marginally higher than the current tax payable ($1,009). However, when asked if they would be willing to pay more if their suggested changes led to an increase in tax, almost a quarter (23%) of respondents stated that they would not be willing to pay more and only one in five (21%) would pay whatever was required.

Attitudes towards possible new policies and reforms

In addition to government spending allocation, respondents were also asked about their level of support or opposition for a series of possible policies and reforms that the government could consider in the future. Generally speaking the possible policies were better received by respondents than the possible reforms. The key points to note are:

- Respondents were generally supportive of the hypothetical policies with at least 80% total support across all but one area. The policy which received the least support (52%) and the most opposition (36%) was 'Lift Net Overseas Migration with a greater focus on skilled migrants'.
- In comparison, respondents were generally less supportive of the hypothetical reforms. The highest level of support (61%) was reported for 'Greater labour market flexibility from new industrial relations reforms'.
- Respondents were more often opposed to increasing GST with over half opposing 'Increase GST to fund more public spending and reduce deficits' (53%) and 'Increase GST to allow cuts in personal income tax rates and/or corporate taxes' (57%).

Support for the hypothetical policies and reforms differed considerably by age and education level. For example, a significantly greater proportion of those aged 35 to 54 supported public infrastructure spending (91%), labour force reforms (88%), and research and development (95%), as well as pro-competition reforms (59%), increasing GST to fund public spending (41%), and industrial relations reforms (68%) compared to those aged 18 to 34.

If a respondent selected 'Strongly support' for two or more policies, or for two or more reforms, they were then asked to indicate which policy and which reform they felt was most important and which they felt was the second most important.

The key points to note are:

- The policy most frequently ranked as most important was 'Lift government funding in higher education' with 29% indicating it was most important and 20% indicating it was second most important.
- The reform most frequently ranked as most important was 'Greater labour market flexibility from new industrial relations reforms' with 31% indicating it was most important and 13% indicating it was second most important.

Demographics

The final section of the survey collected general demographic information and telephone status about respondents. This information was used to monitor progress during fieldwork and as part of data weighting.

The key points to note are:

- The majority of respondents were Australian born with around one in three (28%) born outside of Australia.
- Most respondents lived in couple households with (31%) or without (33%) dependents.
- Almost half the sample was University educated (48%) and just under two thirds were employed either full time (40%) or part time (21%).

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

In June 2012 the Australian Government announced "Securing Australia's Future", a series of strategic research programs designed to provide evidence to support policy development in areas of importance to Australia's future. Securing Australia's Future is coordinated by the Australian Council of Learned Academies (ACOLA) and funded by the Australian Research Council (ARC).

Six initial research topics were identified as part of Securing Australia's Future; one of those topics is "Australia's Comparative Advantage" (ACA) which aims to assess Australia's natural strengths and weaknesses in the context of external threats and opportunities. The ACA research programme involves investigating a broad range of issues using multiple methods by the various disciplines of ACOLA. The Expert Working Group (EWG) of the ACA research programme identified the value of conducting a *Public Preference Study* to better understand the views of Australian citizens and supplement the findings and conclusions of the previous ACA research inputs.

This report describes the findings and methodology of the *Public Preference Study* conducted in February 2015 for ACOLA.

1.2. Research objectives

The general aims of the *Public Preference Study* are to provide information on Australian citizen attitudes to and perceptions of government's public policy reform, public expenditure levels, and desired personal expenditure allocation and outcomes. Specifically the study seeks to:

- Identify citizens' of level support for possible policies and reforms,
- Identify areas of public expenditure that citizen's would prefer to see increased or decreased, and
- Assess citizen's willingness to pay what is required to provide the level of public services that they believe should be funded by governments.

The study was designed to obtain representation from different states and territories across Australia as well as representation across different demographic profiles, such as age and gender.

1.3. Overview and about this report

This report presents the findings and documents the methodological aspects of the ACA *Public Preference Study* conducted by the Social Research Centre on behalf of ACOLA. This study involved a dual frame (landline and mobile) Computer Aided Telephone Interviewing (CATI) survey of 750 Australian adult citizens.

Specifically it seeks to:

- Provide context for the study (Section 1),
- Summarise the research findings (Section 2), and
- Document the methodological approach (Section 3).

1.3.1. Weighted & unweighted data

To correct biases in the sample, the data have been weighted to reflect the general Australian population with respect to gender, age and telephone status so that the results can be generalised as representing all Australians. For more detail on weighting see Section 4.5.2.

Throughout this report, the results presented show *weighted* data, unless otherwise specified. The base "n" figure in charts and tables represents the *unweighted* number of respondents who answered a particular question. 'Invalid' responses such as "Don't know" and "Refused" have been excluded from the weighted base for analysis unless otherwise indicated.

1.3.2. Statistical significance

This report contains significance testing to look for statistically significant differences between sub-groups. This includes t-tests for identifying differences between means and z-scores to test for differences between proportions.

All significance testing is conducted at the 95% confidence level. Where columns are compared, significant differences are indicated by letters below the figure showing which column(s) they differ from. As demonstrated in the Example below, Column 'A' varies significantly from Columns 'B' and 'C', while Column 'B' differs from Column 'A', only.

Example

Column (A)	Column (B)	Column (C)
15 BC	17 A	18

The subgroups included in significance testing throughout this report are:

- Age group
  - 15 to 34 years;
  - 35 to 54 years; and
  - 55 years and older.
- Education level
  - 'Up to Year 12': primary or secondary (or equivalent) schooling only;
  - 'TAFE': TAFE or other trade or technical qualification; and
  - 'University': University or CAE degree or diploma.

2. Research findings

The following section provides a summary of responses to the Public Preference survey, specifically in relation to preference for government spending, support for possible policies and reforms, and demographic characteristics of the respondent sample.

2.1. Government spending

Respondents were asked a series of questions to gauge their opinion of government spending across a range of different areas. First, they were asked if the government should spend more or less on each of a list of nominated areas. If they indicated the government should spend more/less on a particular area, the respondent was then asked to nominate a dollar figure for how much they would be prepared to pay in taxes to provide the level of public services that they supported. Respondents were then asked to consider holistically if they would be willing to pay more tax to accommodate the changes they supported if required.

The areas of government spending presented to respondents were as follows:

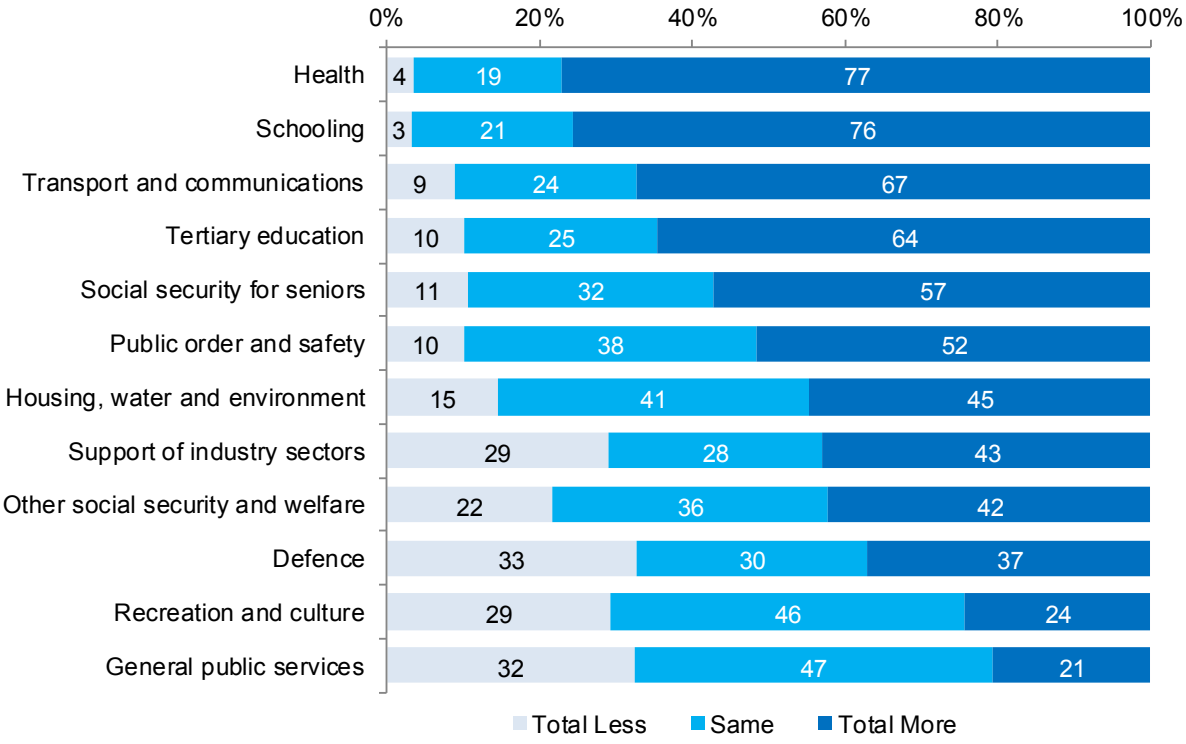
- Defence
- Public order and safety
- Schooling (primary & secondary)
- Tertiary education (University, TAFE, etc.)
- Health
- Social security for seniors
- Other social security and welfare (incl. job seeking, disability, etc.)
- Housing, water and environment (incl. community development & sanitation)
- Recreation and culture
- Support of industry sectors (energy; agriculture; and mining, manufacturing and construction)
- Transport and communications
- General public services (Fed, State and Local Government)

2.1.1. Preference for change

This section of the interview presented respondents with the areas that government currently funds through taxes as described in Section 2.1. Respondents were specifically asked if governments should spend MORE or LESS in each area using a five point response scale from 1 (A lot less) to 5 (A lot more). Interviewers instructed respondents to bear in mind that if they felt ‘more’ should be spent it could require a tax increase, and if they felt ‘less’ less should be spent it could require a reduction in those services.

Error! Reference source not found. presents the total proportion of respondents who thought that overnments should spend more ('A lot more' and 'A little more'), less ('A lot less' and 'A little less'), or that spending should stay the same. Three in four respondents believed that governments should spend more on Health (77%) and Schooling (76%). Around one in three respondents believed that governments should spend less on Defence (33%) and General public services (32%).

Figure 1: Preference for more or less government spending (%)



B2. Do you think governments should spend more or less money on…?
Base: All (n=750)
Note: 'Don't know' and 'Refused' have been excluded for analysis

Table 1 below shows the proportion of respondents who indicated that governments should spend 'more' in each area according to age group and education level.

Generally, a significantly greater proportion of those aged 55 years and over reported that governments should spend more on Defence (44%), Public order and safety (59%), and Housing, water and environment (52%) compared to those aged 18 to 34 years (33%, 44% and 39% respectively). In contrast, a significantly greater proportion of 18 to 34 year olds believed governments should spend more on Schooling (80%) and Recreation and culture (31%) compared to those aged 55 and over (69% and 20% respectively). Significantly more respondents with a highest education level of Year 12 or below believed that governments should spend more across most areas compared to those who were University educated.

Table 1: Preference for MORE government spending by demographics (%)

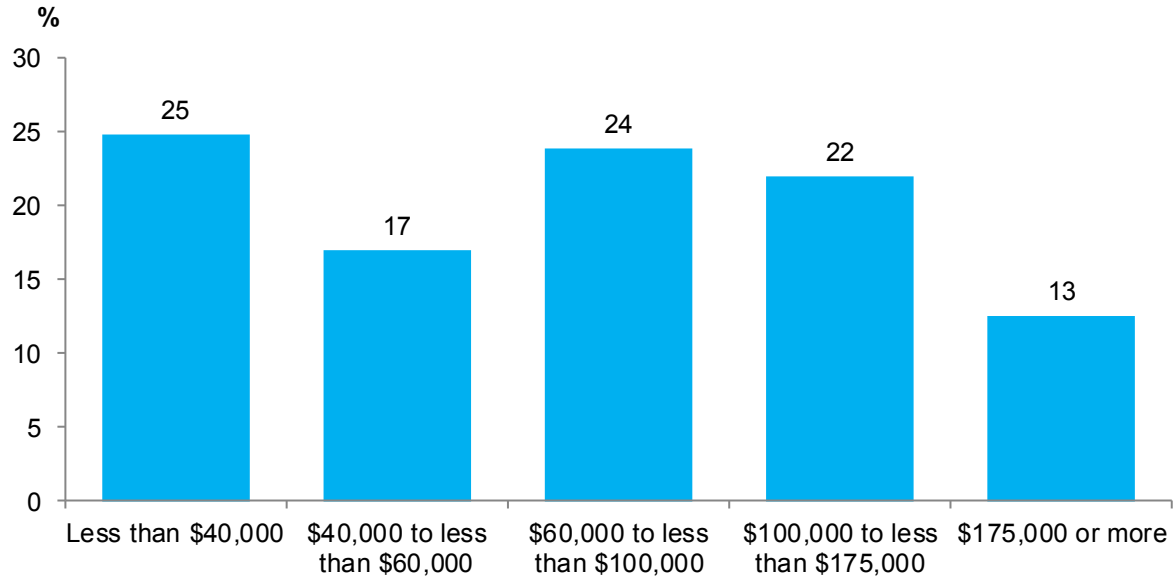
More spending (%)	Age group			Education		
	18-34 (A)	35-54 (B)	55+ (C)	Up to Y12 (D)	TAFE (E)	University (F)
Defence	33	34	44 AB	47 F	48 F	27
Public order and safety	44	51	59 A	63 F	53	44
Schooling	80 C	78 C	69	78	75	74
Tertiary education	65	70 C	59	65	62	65
Health	79	79	73	83 F	76	74
Social security for seniors	55	59	57	66 F	60	51
Other social security and welfare	40	40	47	51 EF	35	40
Housing, water and environment	39	44	52 A	51 F	47	40
Recreation and culture	31 C	23	20	30 F	25	21
Support of industry sectors	49	39	41	50 F	50 F	36
Transport and communications	64	70	68	69	59	70
General public services	23	20	21	24	17	21

B2. Do you think governments should spend more or less money on…?
Base: All (n=750)
Note: 'Don't know' and 'Refused' have been excluded for analysis

2.1.2. Expenditure allocation

Respondents were then specifically asked to nominate dollar values for how much they would be prepared to pay in taxes. In order to do this, respondents were first asked their approximate total household income (in ranges) from all sources, including private income, superannuation, and any government income support, over the last 12 months. A summary of respondent household income is provided in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Household income (%)



B4a. Before tax is taken out, which of the following ranges best describes your approximate total HOUSEHOLD income, from all sources, including private income, superannuation, and any government income support, over the last 12 months?
Base: All (n=750)
Note: 'Don't know' and 'Refused' have been excluded for analysis

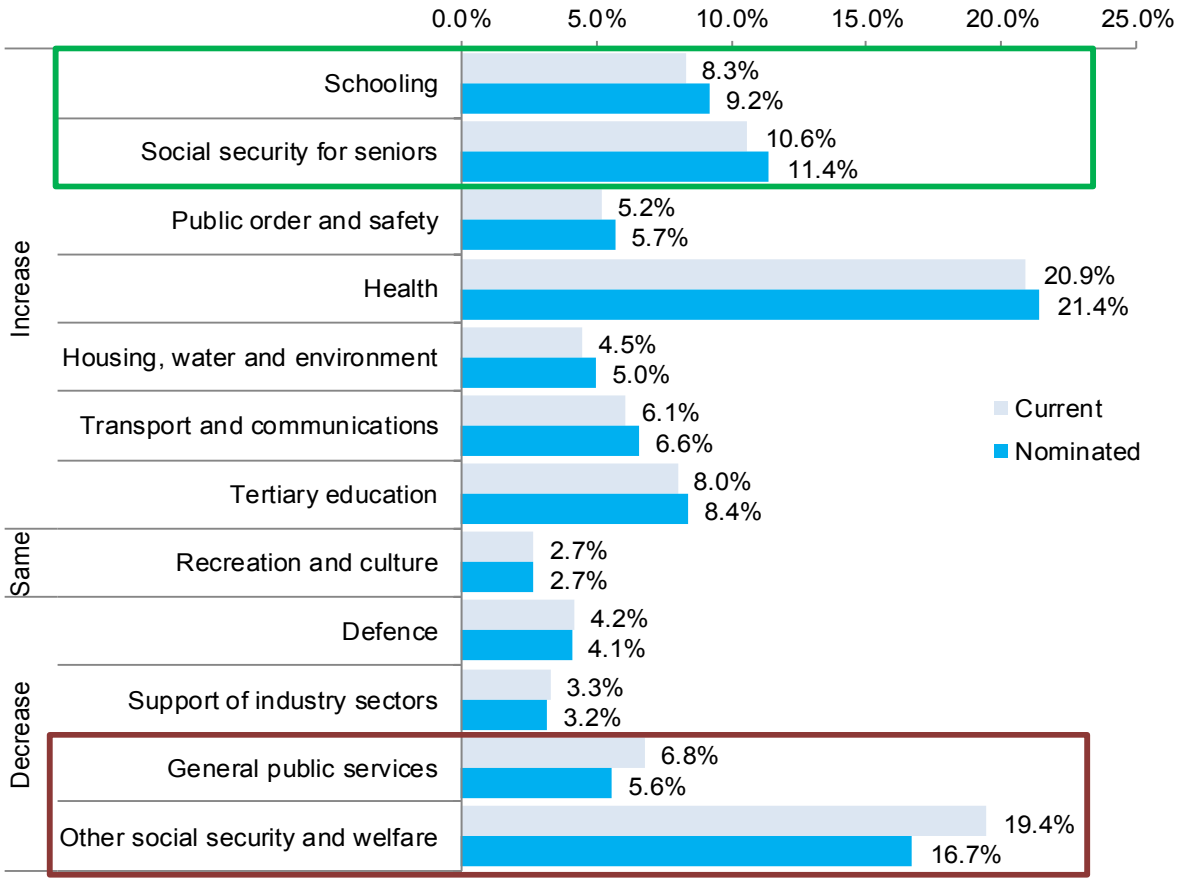
Based on the respondent's total household income range and the proportional allocation of government expenses by area[1], each respondent was presented with a tax amount, indicative of the tax paid by households with similar income levels towards the different areas of government spending. This figure was calculated from the mean tax of the reported household income range and rounded to the nearest $100. If a respondent did not wish to indicate their income range they were asked to assume their household had the average Australian household income of just over $100,000 (or $100,806). After being told the indicative tax amount that households with a similar income to theirs currently pay to each area of government spending, respondents were then asked how much they felt their household should actually pay towards each area.

[1] http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/5512.0Main%20Features72012-13?opendocument&tabname=Summary&prodno=5512.0&issue=2012-13&num=&view

To assist in reporting, a proportion above or below the 'current' amount was calculated to represent how much each respondent nominated their household should pay towards each area as a function of their total nominated tax. For example, if the sum of a respondent's nominated tax values was $10,000 and the respondent indicated that they were willing to pay $1,000 towards a particular area of government spending, this would represent a nominated allocation of 10% from their nominated tax.

Figure 3 below presents the current government expenditure[2] and nominated tax allocations proportionate to the total amount payable (including income tax and GST). The average nominated allocations were generally in line with the current distribution, with marginal increases (less than 1%) across most categories. The biggest differences in the nominated distribution were Other social security and welfare (2.7% decrease), General public services (1.2% decrease), Schooling (0.9% increase), and Social security for seniors (0.8% increase).

Figure 3: Expenditure distribution – current and mean nominated allocation proportions



B4c. Currently, HOUSEHOLDS with a similar income to yours pay around [BDUM_a] dollars on <insert question B2_a> in taxes of all kinds (including income tax and GST). In YOUR opinion, how much should your HOUSEHOLD actually pay towards <insert question B2_a>?
Base: Thinks government should spend more or less on each activity (n range=324-499)
Note: 'Don't know' and 'Refused' have been excluded for analysis

[2] See 'Appendix A: Final Questionnaire' for calculation of current tax payable and proportionate distribution by category

Table 2 below presents the current and nominated distribution proportions according to age group and education level. Those aged 35 to 54 nominated a significantly higher proportion (12.0%) of their taxes to Social security for seniors compared to those aged 18 to 34 (10.6%). In contrast, those aged 18 to 34 allocated a significantly greater proportion of their taxes to Transport and communication (6.9%) compared to those aged 35 to 54 (6.2%). Respondents with a University qualification allocated a greater proportion to Schooling (9.5%) compared to those whose highest education level was Year 12 or below (8.6%). University graduates also allocated a greater proportion to Tertiary education (8.9%) compared to those who completed up to Year 12 (7.7%) and those who had a TAFE qualification (8.1%).

Table 2: Expenditure distribution – by demographics (%)

	Current %	Nominated %					
		Age group			Education		
		18-34 (A)	35-54 (B)	55+ (C)	Up to Y12 (D)	TAFE (E)	University (F)
Defence	4.2	3.8	4.2	4.3	4.6 F	4.2	3.7
Public order and safety	5.2	5.8	5.7	5.7	5.6	5.3	6.0
Schooling	8.3	9.1	9.2	9.1	8.6	9.1	9.5 D
Tertiary education	8.0	8.1	8.8	8.2	7.7	8.1	8.9 DE
Health	20.9	21.4	21.4	21.5	21.9	21.4	21.2
Social security for seniors	10.6	10.6	12.0 A	11.6	11.4	11.2	11.5
Other social security and welfare	19.4	16.8	16.2	17.4	17.4	15.7	16.6
Housing, water and environment	4.5	5.0	5.0	5.1	5.1	5.0	5.0
Recreation and culture	2.7	2.8	2.6	2.6	2.5	2.9	2.7
Support of industry sectors	3.3	3.3	3.2	3.1	3.3	3.5	3.1
Transport and communications	6.1	6.9 B	6.2	6.7	6.3	6.5	6.7
General public services	6.8	5.6	5.6	5.5	5.5	5.2	5.8

B4c. Currently, HOUSEHOLDS with a similar income to yours pay around [BDUM_a] dollars on <insert question B2_a> in taxes of all kinds (including income tax and GST). In YOUR opinion, how much should your HOUSEHOLD actually pay towards <insert question B2_a>?
Base: Thinks government should spend more or less on each activity (n range=324-499)
Note: 'Don't know' and 'Refused' have been excluded for analysis

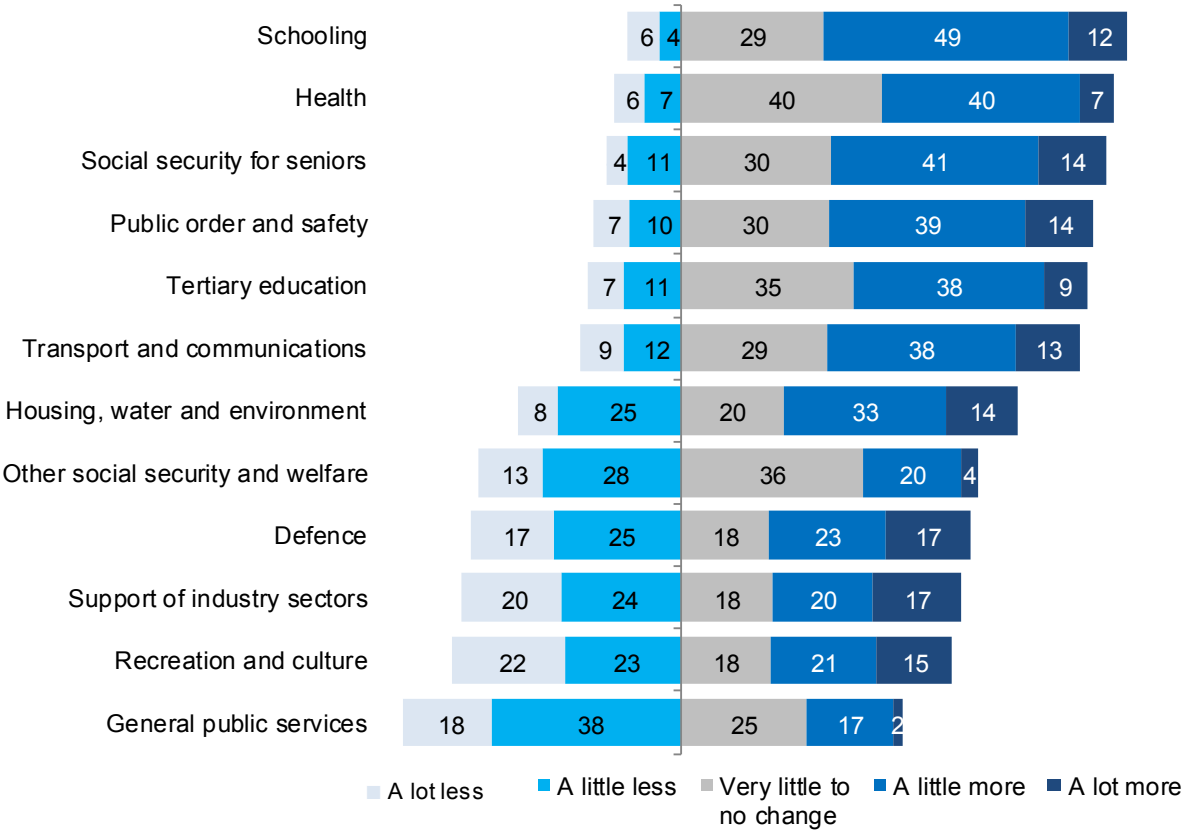
2.1.3. Nominated expenditure change

While the average proportion nominated for each area of government spending was relatively similar to the current allocation, there was significant variance in the level of increase or decrease provided by each respondent. Figure 4 below shows the proportion of respondents categorised by the level of increase or decrease from the current value. The categories are:

- A lot less (50% - 100% decrease),
- A little less (10% - 49% decrease),
- Very little to no change (+/- 9%),
- A little higher (10% - 49% increase), and
- A lot higher (50% + increase).

More than half of the respondents (56%) nominated a dollar value which was 'a little less' or 'a lot less' than the current value for General public services; only 2% nominated a value which was 'a lot more'. More than half the respondents nominated a value which was 'a little more' or 'a lot more' than the current figure for Schooling (61%), Social security for seniors (55%), Public order and safety (53%), and Transport and communications (51%). Around one in three respondents nominated a value which within +/- 9% of the current value for Other social security and welfare (36%) and for Tertiary education (35%).

Figure 4: Nominated expenditure change (categorised) (%)



B4c. Currently, HOUSEHOLDS with a similar income to yours pay around [BDUM_a] dollars on <insert question B2_a> in taxes of all kinds (including income tax and GST). In YOUR opinion, how much should your HOUSEHOLD actually pay towards <insert question B2_a>? [CATEGORISED]
Base: Thinks government should spend more or less on each activity (n range=324-499)
Note: 'Don't know' and 'Refused' have been excluded for analysis

Using the dollar values nominated by respondents, a 'total tax payable' value was calculated (where no change was indicated at B2 the current tax amount was used). Table 3 below provides a summary of the average tax amounts, including the current amount, the nominated amount and the implied change. While the minimum and maximum nominated tax amounts varied considerably from the current amounts, the mean figure for 'nominated tax payable' was $23,764; only $1,009 more than current tax payable ($22,756).

Table 3: Average tax – current, nominated & implied change ($)

	Current tax payable	Nominated tax payable	Implied change
Mean	$22,756	$23,764	+$1,009
Min	$7,447	$0	-$26,007
Max	$62,080	$131,497	+$69,417
St. Dv.	$16,513	$18,330	$5,524

BCUR. PROGRAMMER NOTE: create dummy numeric variable 'BCUR: total amount current' based on sum of BDUM
BNOM. PROGRAMMER NOTE: create dummy numeric variable 'BNOM: total amount nominated' based on sum of B4c
BFIN. PROGRAMMER NOTE: create dummy numeric variable 'BFIN: implied increase or decrease in taxes' based on sum of BNOM minus BCUR.
Base: Thinks government should spend more or less on each activity (n range=324-499)
Note: 'Don't know' and 'Refused' have been excluded for analysis

The average nominated amount varied significantly by age group and education level; however this is likely affected by household income bracket associated with various demographic groups.

The 'implied change', however, did not differ significantly between groups; with exception of those with a University qualification whose average nominated amount was significantly greater (+$1,542), compared to those with a TAFE qualification (+$209).

Table 4: Average tax – implied change ($) by demographics

	Age group			Education		
	18-34 (A)	35-54 (B)	55+ (C)	Up to Y12 (D)	TAFE (E)	University (F)
Mean	+$474	+$1,422	+$1,119	+$666	+$209	+$1,542 E
Min	-$22,007	-$26,007	-$12,035	-$12,285	-$22,007	-$26,007
Max	+$11,600	+$69,417	+$68,441	+$39,698	+$14,420	+$69,417
St. Dv.	$3,344	$6,851	$5,566	$3,737	$4,071	$6,752

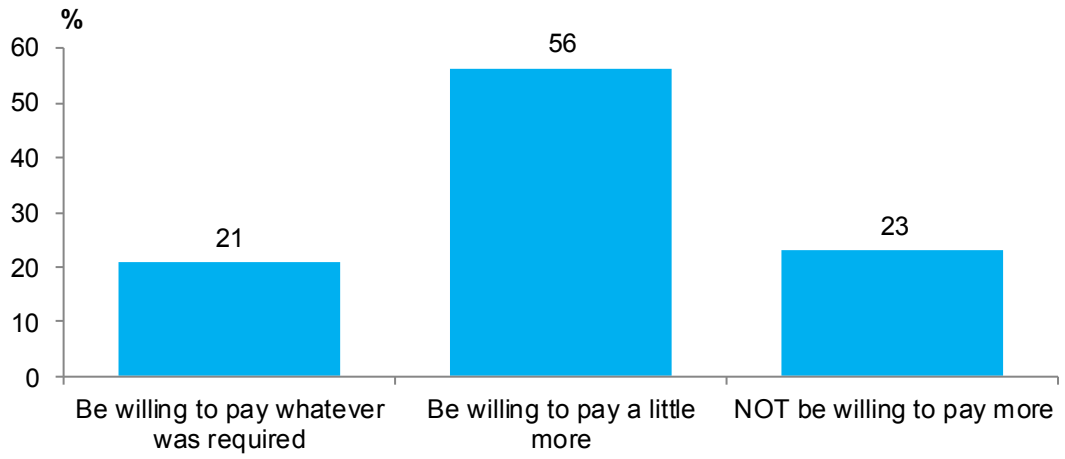
BCUR. PROGRAMMER NOTE: create dummy numeric variable 'BCUR: total amount current' based on sum of BDUM
BNOM. PROGRAMMER NOTE: create dummy numeric variable 'BNOM: total amount nominated' based on sum of B4c
BFIN. PROGRAMMER NOTE: create dummy numeric variable 'BFIN: implied increase or decrease in taxes' based on sum of BNOM minus BCUR.
Base: Thinks government should spend more or less on each activity (n range=324-499)
Note: 'Don't know' and 'Refused' have been excluded for analysis

2.1.4. Willingness to increase tax

The final question in this section of the interview asked respondents their willingness to contribute more if all the changes that they had nominated led to an increase in taxes. Specifically respondents were asked if they would be 'willing to pay whatever was required' (1), 'willing to pay a little more' (2) or 'not willing to pay more' (3).

As shown in Figure 5 below, when respondents were asked if they would be willing to pay more to accommodate the changes they had nominated, more than half indicated that they would be willing to pay a little more (56%), while one in five (21%) reported that they would pay whatever was required. Almost a quarter (23%) of respondents stated that they would not be willing to pay more.

Figure 5: Willingness to pay more (%)



B3 And if all of these changes led to an increase in tax for EVERYONE, would you…
Base: All (n=750)
Note: 'Don't know' and 'Refused' have been excluded for analysis

These findings were relatively consistent between age groups; however, those who completed Year 12 or below (29%) and those with a TAFE qualification (29%) were significantly more likely to select 'NOT willing to pay more' compared to those with a University qualification (17%). It is likely this is influenced by income level associated with education level – e.g. 64% of those who completed Year 12 or below have a household income of $60,000 or less, compared to 26% of those with a University qualification.

Table 5: Willingness to pay more – by demographics (%)

	Age group			Education		
	18-34 (A)	35-54 (B)	55+ (C)	Up to Y12 (D)	TAFE (E)	University (F)
Be willing to pay whatever was required	24	22	17	17	17	24
Be willing to pay a little more	53	55	61	53	54	59
NOT be willing to pay more	23	23	23	29 F	29 F	17

B3 And if all of these changes led to an increase in tax for EVERYONE, would you…
Base: All (n=750)
Note: 'Don't know' and 'Refused' have been excluded for analysis

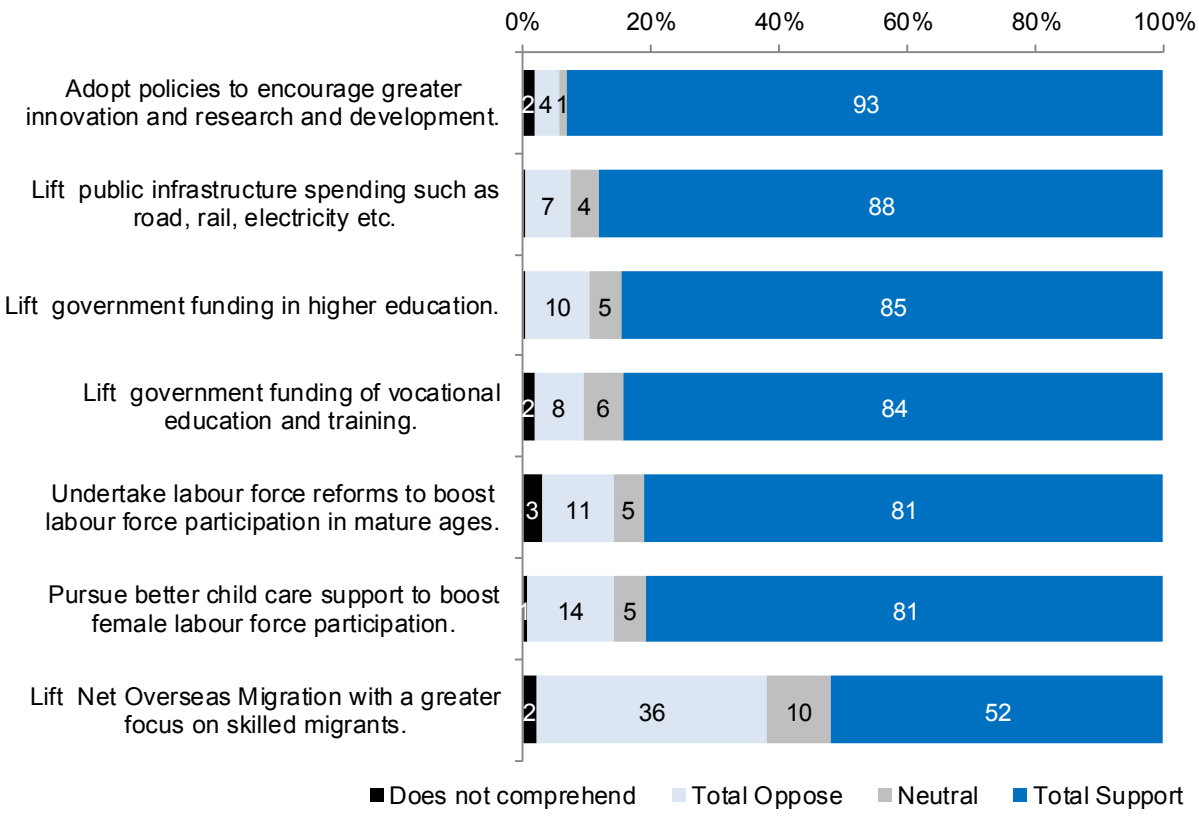
2.2. Policy support

A series of possible policies that a government could consider in the future were presented to respondents and they were asked to indicate their level of support for (or opposition to) each policy. Respondents were asked to use a five point scale from 1 (Strongly oppose) to 5 (Strongly support) to indicate their level of support for or opposition to each policy.

Figure 6 presents the total proportion of respondents who supported ('Somewhat support' or 'Strongly support'), opposed ('Somewhat oppose' or 'Strongly oppose') or were neutral with respect to each possible policy. Respondents were generally supportive of the hypothetical policies with at least 80% total support across all but one area. The policy which received the least support (52%) and the most opposition (36%) was 'Lift Net Overseas Migration with a greater focus on skilled migrants'.

While not included in the chart below, it should be noted that only around 5% of all respondents said "Don't know" when asked if they supported or opposed "Undertake labour force reforms to boost labour force participation in mature ages"; similarly 4% said "Don't know" in response to "Lift Net Overseas Migration with a greater focus on skilled migrants".

Figure 6: Support of possible policies (%)



B5 To what extent do you support or oppose the following possible policies.
Base: All (n=750)
Note: 'Don't know' and 'Refused' have been excluded for analysis

There were some significant differences in support according to age group and education level. A significantly greater proportion of those aged 35 to 54 supported public infrastructure spending (91%), labour force reforms (88%), and research and development (95%) compared to those aged 18 to 34. Those aged 35 to 54 were also significantly more likely to support higher education funding (89%) and child care support (83%) compared to those aged 55 and over. Respondents with a University qualification were significantly more likely to support public infrastructure spending (91%), overseas migration (63%), child care support (85%), and research and development (96%) compared to those who completed Year 12 or below.

Table 6: Support of possible policies – by demographics (%)

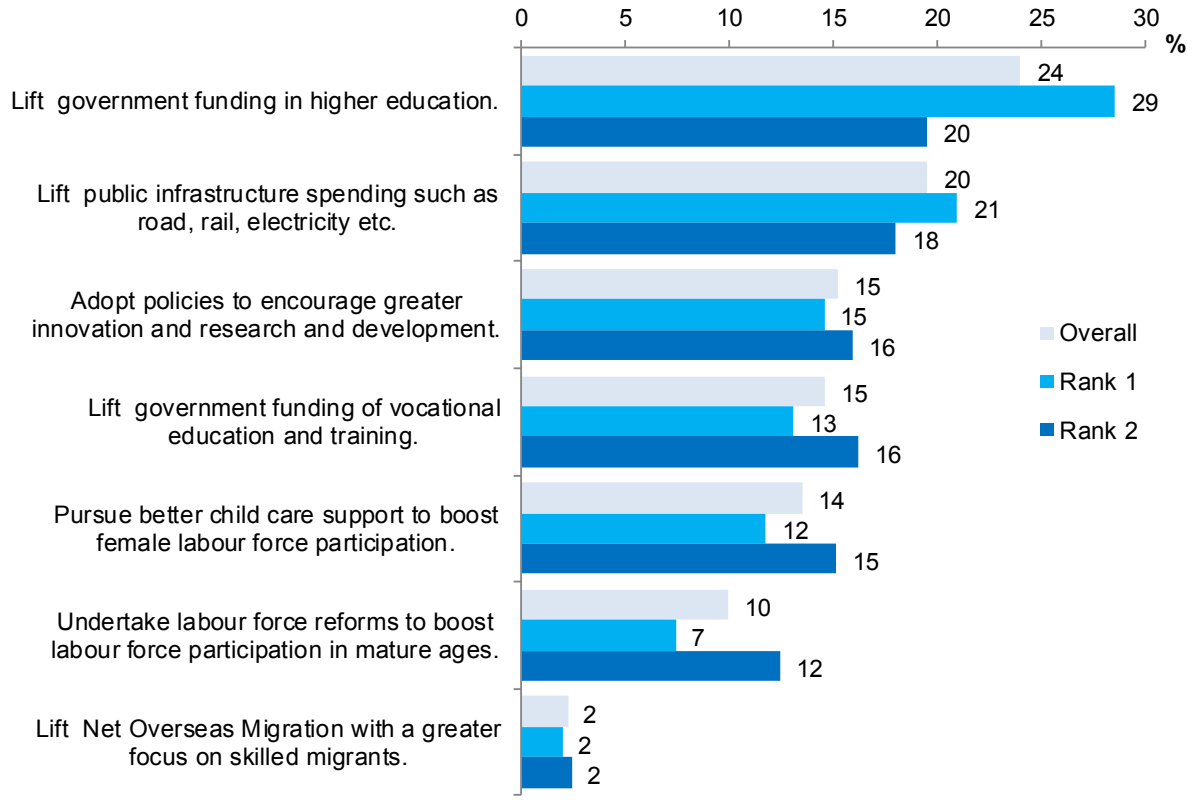
Total support (%)	Age group			Education		
	18-34 (A)	35-54 (B)	55+ (C)	Up to Y12 (D)	TAFE (E)	University (F)
Lift public infrastructure spending such as road, rail, electricity etc.	83	91 A	90	84	88	91 D
Lift government funding in higher education.	84	89 C	80	82	85	86
Lift government funding of vocational education and training.	79	87	86	84	83	85
Lift Net Overseas Migration with a greater focus on skilled migrants.	58 C	52	46	44	37	63 DE
Pursue better child care support to boost female labour force participation.	87 C	83 C	72	75	78	85 D
Undertake labour force reforms to boost labour force participation in mature ages.	70	88 A	83 A	78	79	84
Adopt policies to encourage greater innovation and research and development.	89	95 A	95 A	91	89	96 DE

B5 To what extent do you support or oppose the following possible policies.
Base: All (n=750)
Note: 'Don't know' and 'Refused' have been excluded for analysis

If a respondent selected 'Strongly support' for two or more policies they were then asked to indicate which policy they felt was **most** important and which they felt was the **second most** important.

Figure 7 shows that the policy most frequently ranked as most important was 'Lift government funding in higher education' with 29% indicating it was most important and 20% indicating it was second most important. The second highest ranking policy was 'Lift public infrastructure spending such as road, rail, electricity, etc.' with 21% indicating it was most important and 18% indicating it was second most important. Only 2% of respondents felt they could not decide which policy was more important.

Figure 7: Rank order of policy support (%)



B5x. Of the policies you strongly support, which do you think is the most important and which is the second most important?
Base: Strongly supports at least two policies (n=652)
Note: 'Don't know' and 'Refused' have been excluded for analysis

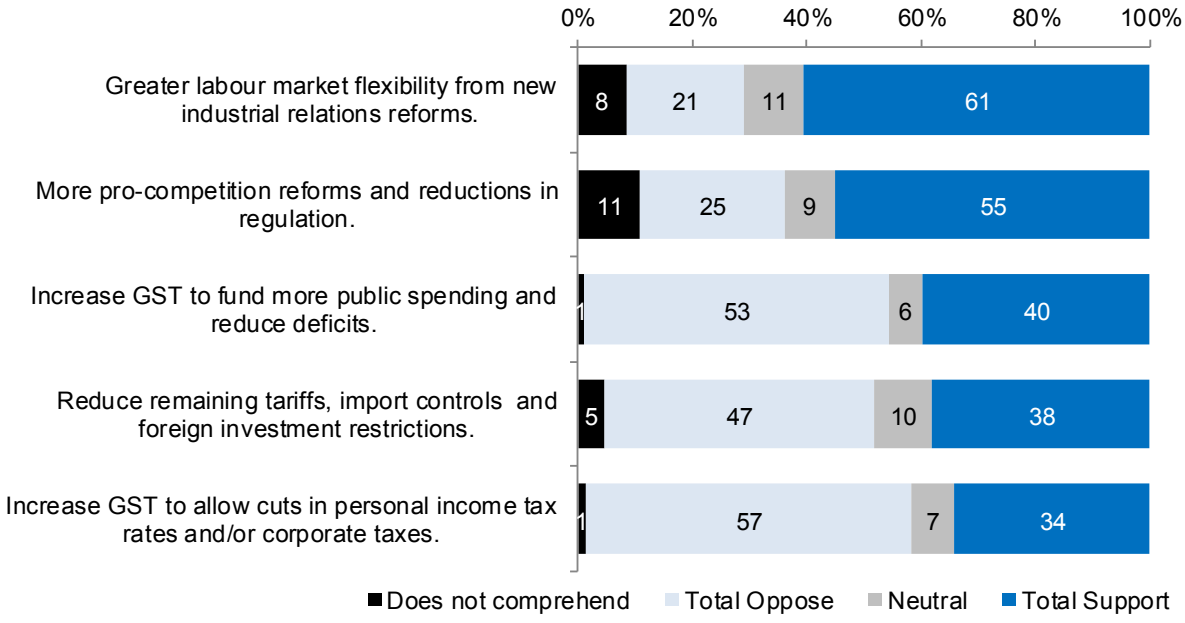
2.3. Reforms support

Respondents were also asked to indicate their level of support for (or opposition to) a series of possible reforms that a government could consider in the future. The same five point scale from 1 (Strongly oppose) to 5 (Strongly support) as used for Policy Support (Section 2.2) was used to indicate their level of support for or opposition to each reform.

Figure 8 presents the total proportion of respondents who supported ('Somewhat support' or 'Strongly support'), opposed ('Somewhat oppose' or 'Strongly oppose) or were neutral to each possible reform. Respondents were generally less supportive of the hypothetical reforms compared to the hypothetical policies. The highest level of support (61%) was reported for 'Greater labour market flexibility from new industrial relations reforms'. Respondents were more often opposed to increasing GST with over half opposing 'Increase GST to fund more public spending and reduce deficits' (53%) and 'Increase GST to allow cuts in personal income tax rates and/or corporate taxes' (57%).

It should be noted that some of the reforms were difficult for respondents to provide a valid response and certainly more difficult than possible policies. For example, 11% of respondents stated that they 'did not comprehend' the statement 'More pro-competition reforms and reductions in regulation' (10% of the total sample said 'Don't know). Similarly, for the statement 'Greater labour market flexibility from new industrial relations reforms' 8% of respondents stated that they 'did not comprehend' (11% of the total sample said "Don't know").

Figure 8: Support of possible reforms (%)



B6. To what extent do you support or oppose the following possible reforms.
Base: All (n=750)
Note: 'Don't know' and 'Refused' have been excluded for analysis

As seen with policy support, there were some significant differences in support for the possible reforms according to age group and education level. A significantly greater proportion of those aged 35 to 54 supported pro-competition reforms (59%), increasing GST to fund public spending (41%), and industrial relations reforms (68%) compared to those aged 18 to 34. Respondents with a University qualification were more likely to support new industrial relations reforms (65%) compared to those who completed Year 12 or below.

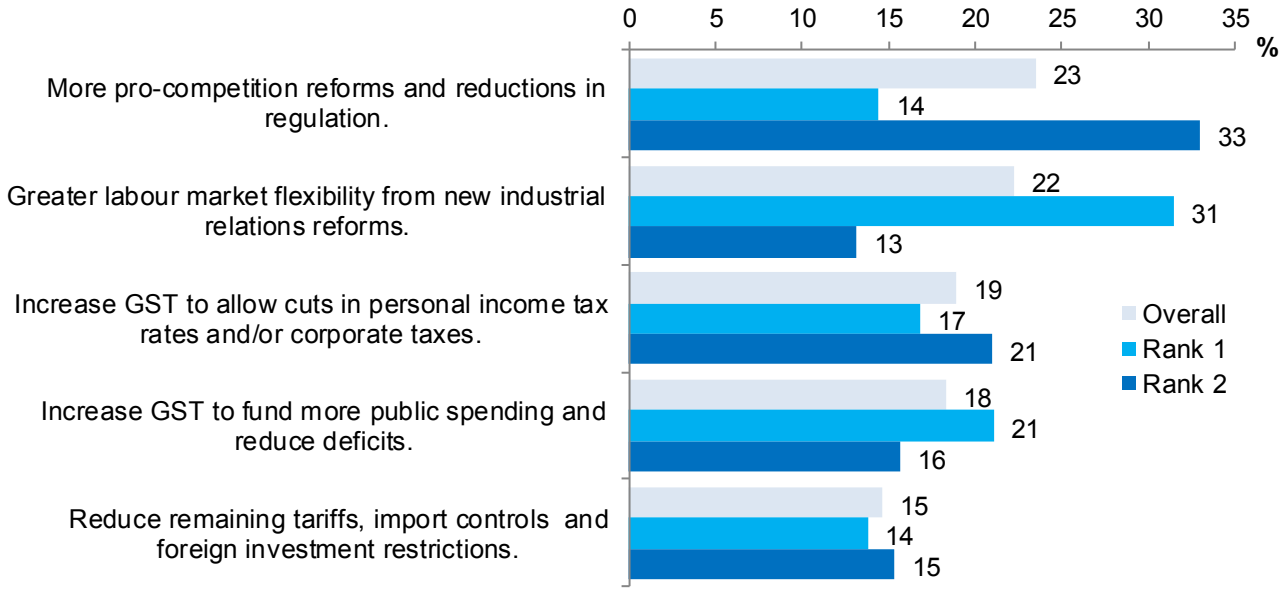
Table 7: Support of possible reforms – by demographics (%)

Total support (%)	Age group			Education		
	18-34 (A)	35-54 (B)	55+ (C)	Up to Y12 (D)	TAFE (E)	University (F)
More pro-competition reforms and reductions in regulation.	47	59 A	58	54	56	56
Increase GST to fund more public spending and reduce deficits.	35	41 A	44	35	44	41
Increase GST to allow cuts in personal income tax rates and/or corporate taxes.	33	39	30	34	35	35
Reduce remaining tariffs, import controls and foreign investment restrictions.	39	40	36	42	40	35
Greater labour market flexibility from new industrial relations reforms.	56	68 AC	57	54	60	65 D

B6. To what extent do you support or oppose the following possible reforms.
Base: All (n=750)
Note: 'Don't know' and 'Refused' have been excluded for analysis

If a respondent selected 'Strongly support' for two or more reforms they were then asked to indicate which they felt was **most** and which was the **second most** important. Figure 9 shows that the reform most frequently ranked as most important was 'Greater labour market flexibility from new industrial relations reforms' with 31% indicating it was most important and 13% indicating it was second most important; and 'More pro-competition reforms and reductions in regulation' with 14% indicating it was most important and 33% indicating it was second most important. Only 2% of respondents felt they could not decide which reform was more important.

Figure 9: Rank order of reform support (%)



B6x. Of the reforms you strongly support, which do you think is the most important and which is the second most important?
Base: Strongly supports at least two reforms (n=184)
Note: 'Don't know' and 'Refused' have been excluded for analysis

2.4. Demographics

In the final section of the survey, respondents were asked general demographic information to better understand the characteristics of those participating in the study. Table 8 provides a summary of respondent characteristics, including the unweighted number of respondents and the corresponding proportion. The majority of respondents were Australian born with around one in three (28%) born outside of Australia (2011 ABS Census: 30.2%). Most respondents lived in couple households with dependents (31%) or without dependents (33%). Almost half the sample was University educated (48%) and just under two thirds were employed either full time (40%) or part time (21%).

Table 8: Demographic characteristics (unweighted) (n and %)

Category	Sub-group	n	%
Gender	Male	382	51
	Female	368	49
Country of birth	Australia	537	72
	New Zealand	21	3
	UK/Ireland	62	8
	Other Europe	26	3
	India	10	1
	Asia	18	2
	USA/Canada	6	1
	Other	69	9
Age bracket	18-24 years	57	8
	25-34 years	80	11
	35-44 years	107	14
	45-54 years	143	19
	55-64 years	159	21
	65+ years	203	27
Household	One person with no dependants	155	21
	Couple with no dependants	246	33
	One person with dependant(s)	41	5
	Couple with dependant(s)	229	31
	Group household	67	9
	Other	11	1
Education qualification	Up to Y12	236	32
	TAFE	155	21
	University	357	48
Work status	Employed full-time	299	40
	Employed part-time or casual	155	21
	Home duties	30	4
	Retired	203	27
	Unemployed	16	2
	Not working (student, unable to work)	45	6
Location	ACT	9	1
	NSW	236	31
	NT	6	1
	QLD	139	19
	SA	77	10
	TAS	17	2
	VIC	190	25
	WA	76	10

Base: All (n=750)
Note: 'Don't know' and 'Refused' have been excluded for analysis

3. Concluding comments

This Public Preference Study was designed to inform ACOLA's overall ACA research programme by providing information on Australian citizen attitudes to and perceptions of government's public policy reform, public expenditure levels and desired personal expenditure allocation and outcomes.

Findings suggest that despite individual preferences for spending more or less in various areas, nominated amounts typically represented only a small adjustment or were relatively consistent with current allocations. That said, preferences for spending allocation often differed by respondents' age or education attainment and reflected their individual circumstances and possibly their biases. For example, those aged 35 to 54 allocated a higher proportion to Social security for seniors compared to those aged 18 to 34. Similarly, those with a University qualification allocated a greater proportion to Schooling and Tertiary education compared to other education levels.

When summed together, the average nominated tax amount was only $1,009 more than the current average amount contributed by households. This variance was relatively consistent between age groups; however it was greater for University graduates compared to those with a TAFE qualification. Furthermore, three quarters said they were willing to pay at least a little more in their taxes to accommodate the changes they had nominated. This was, however, less likely among those who completed Year 12 or below and those with a TAFE qualification.

In terms of the possible new policies canvassed, respondents were generally supportive, though one third opposed 'Lift Net Overseas Migration with a greater focus on skilled migrants'. Findings indicate that respondents found some of the reforms presented difficult to understand and this may have impacted their ability to provide a rating for their level of support or opposition. These results highlight the importance of communication and leadership in their public debate. As was the case with government spending allocations, the level of support and opposition to the possible polices and reforms were found to differ by respondents' age and education. Younger respondents were more supportive of education funding and child care support while older respondents favoured public infrastructure spending, labour force reforms, and research and development. At an overall level over half opposed increases to GST. Reflecting their likely stage in life, older respondents indicated greater support to pro-competition reforms, increasing GST to fund public spending, and industrial relations reforms.

4. Methodology

4.1. Methodological overview

The ACA Public Preference study was conducted via computer assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) using a dual frame (mobile and land line) random digit dialling approach. An existing survey tool was customised for the study by the Social Research Centre in consultation with ACOLA to ensure the questionnaire would be appropriate for the mode of delivery while still addressing the research objectives. A 50:50 split of mobile and landline samples was employed with the target audience being Australian citizens aged 18 years and older.

Participants were invited to complete a phone interview with a member of the Social Research Centre interviewing team between February 3 and February 22, 2015. The study included a 'soft launch' where interviewing ceased after the first day to review the survey structure and flow. Members of the mobile sample were sent an advance text message at least 24 hours prior to their first call attempt. As part of managing the project budget associated with a longer interview the target interviews were reduced marginally. A summary of key field statistics is presented in Table 9 below.

Table 9: Key field statistics (Main survey only)

	Original Target	Final Outcome
Total interviews completed	800	750
Landline numbers	400	375
Mobile numbers	400	375
Response rate (simple) (%)	-	26.2
Landline numbers (%)	-	31.9
Mobile numbers (%)	-	22.3
Average interview length	15 minutes	17.2 minutes
Fieldwork conducted	5-Feb to 22-Feb, 2015	5-Feb to 22-Feb, 2015

4.1.1. Sample design

The in-scope population for the Public Preference Study was Australian citizens (or residents) aged 18 years and older who could respond to a telephone survey in English. The sample design for the landline strata involved geographic stratification in proportion to the population as estimated by the 2011 ABS Census data. A representative sample was achieved by selecting and drawing the sample at State and Territory metropolitan and non-metropolitan level.

Soft quotas were set for landline sample members by region to ensure the final sample was relatively geographically representative. Location quotas were not possible for the mobile strata as Australian mobile numbers do not include location based information. Once contact was made with households, interviewers asked to speak with the household member (aged 18 or over) who had the most recent birthday; mobile answerers were asked to confirm if they were aged 18 or over. Respondents were then asked to confirm their citizenship status to ensure they were in-scope for the study.

4.1.2. Schedule overview

The table below outlines the schedule for the study.

Table 10: Overview of schedule

Phase / task	Date
Finalisation of questionnaire	28-Jan-2015
Finalisation of sample	27-Jan-2015
Main fieldwork briefing	3-Feb-2015
Main fieldwork commencement	3-Feb-2015
Main fieldwork completion	22-Feb-2015
Final outputs delivered	3-Mar-2015
Final report delivered	27-Mar-2015

4.1.3. Survey procedures & response maximisation

An SMS was sent to the mobile sample to provide pre-notification of the study, increase the proportion of in-scope respondents and reduce the number of refusals encountered once fieldwork began. In compliance with the Spam Act 2003 the wording of the text message was purely factual and provided an opportunity to opt out:

> *"This is a message from the Social Research Centre – a subsidiary of the Australian National University. We will call this number in the coming days to see if you're eligible for an important national survey about how governments spend our taxes. Reply '1' to Opt Out. If you'd like to contact the Social Research Centre about this study please call 1800 023 040."*

The standard call routine used by the Social Research Centre is to place up to six calls to establish contact with the landline sample and up to four calls for the mobile sample; with additional calls to honour appointments as necessary. Calls were initiated between 9:00am and 8:30pm on Weekdays and between 11:00am and 5:00pm on Weekends with the majority of calls placed outside of business hours unless by appointment.

The Social Research Centre provided the company's 1800 helpdesk number to respondents. The phone line was staffed by the Incoming Call Solutions (ICS) team between 9:00am and 8:30pm on Weekdays and from 11:00am to 5:00pm on Weekends. The number was made available in the primary approach SMS and was primarily used by sample members using 'call back' functionality to respond to a missed call.

In addition to the survey procedures outlined above, the Social Research Centre implemented additional resources to support response maximisation efforts, including:

- The creation of a web presence for the survey, with information on the project;
- Providing a Plain Language Statement for respondents' and interviewers' reference;
- Referencing the Australian National University in the SMS and the introductory script to further enhance the credibility of the survey with a familiar academic 'brand'.

4.2. Questionnaire development & testing

4.2.1. Questionnaire development

The questionnaire was customised using an existing survey tool that has been administered twice in the past, once by personal interview and once by mail out. The questionnaire was 'operationalised' by the Social Research Centre, in consultation with ACOLA, to prepare the instrument for a telephone interviewing format and provided suggestions for refinement following the soft-launch.

Those who agreed to participate in the survey were routed through a series of questions to ensure informed consent and confirm eligibility for the study. The Public Preference survey was structured as follows:

- Section A: Introduction & Consent
- Section B: Government Services
- Section C: Demographics
- Section D: Recontact & Close

4.2.2. Feedback from soft-launch

The questionnaire underwent several refinements between the initial soft-launch and main fieldwork. These changes were the result of feedback from the field team after the first night of interviewing. A summary of changes is provided below.

- A1: Shortened and moved mention of ACOLA to A2 unless asked by the respondent.
- A1a/b: Focused initial screening on age (A1a) and added a confirmatory question around residency to reduce confusion
- PB2: Simplified text to: "Please bear in mind that if you say 'more' it could require a tax increase, and if you say 'less' it could require a reduction in those services."
- B3: Shortened wording to: "If these changes lead to an increase in tax for everyone, would you…"
- PB5: Emphasised "POSSIBLE" and "COULD" and shortened text.
- B4c/B2: Questionnaire reordered so that income was asked initially (B4a) and then each of B2 and B4c were asked together for each area of Government spending.
    - B5 and B6 were moved upfront so income wasn't the very first question asked.
- B5: Removed "As a share of national income" from each appropriate item. And changed option D to "Lift Net Overseas Migration with a greater focus on skilled migrants."
- R3: added "possible" to "future research".

A copy of the final clean questionnaire is provided at Appendix A.

4.3. Call outcome analysis

4.3.1. Final call outcomes

Of all the numbers initiated, 11.1% resulted in a completed interview. The most common call outcome at the end of field was 'no contact' (40.3%). Prior to field commencement, 3,936 SMSs were sent to mobile records; of those 867 (22%) opted-out of the study.

Table 11: Final call outcome summary

Call outcome	Total n	Total %	Landline %	Mobile %
Total numbers initiated (n)	**6743**		2990	3753*
Interviews	750	11.1	12.5	10.0
Appointments	128	1.9	3.0	1.0
Refusals	**2108**	**31.3**	**26.8**	**34.8**
Household refusal	278	4.1	9.3	0.0
Selected QR refusal	528	7.8	16.8	0.7
Mobile answerer refusal	381	5.7	0.0	10.2
Midway termination	20	0.3	0.1	0.4
Named person not known	12	0.2	0.3	0.1
Remove number from list	11	0.2	0.2	0.1
ICS: hard refusal	7	0.1	0.0	0.2
ICS: soft refusal	4	0.1	0.0	0.1
SMS opt out	867	12.9	0.0	23.1
Other contacts	**254**	**3.8**	**5.4**	**2.5**
Claims to have done survey	1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Selected respondent away duration	28	0.4	0.7	0.2
Language difficulty	132	2.0	2.1	1.8
Too old/frail/ill health	92	1.4	2.5	0.5
Respondent unreliable/drunk	1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Screen outs	**119**	**1.8**	**0.4**	**2.8**
No one 18 plus in household	1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Mobile respondent not 18 plus	69	1.0	0.0	1.8
Non-Resident screen out	49	0.7	0.4	1.0
No contact	2717	40.3	**38.6**	41.6
No answer	1218	18.1	15.0	20.5
Engaged	87	1.3	0.4	2.0
Answering machine	1073	15.9	11.9	19.1
Incoming call restrictions	3	0.0	0.0	0.1
Maximum non-contact attempts	336	5.0	11.2	0.0
Subtotal usable numbers	**6076**	**90.1**	**86.8**	**92.8**
Unusable	**667**	**9.9**	**13.2**	**7.2**
Number disconnected	285	4.2	1.6	6.3
Not a residential number	210	3.1	6.0	0.8
FAX machine/Modem	172	2.6	5.7	0.1

*Note: after SMS opt outs were excluded 2885 mobile numbers were initiated

4.3.2. Response rates

For the Public Preference Study, two response rates are provided. The 'simple response rate' is defined as the number of completed interviews as a proportion of interviews and refusals. In addition to the simple response rate, the AAPOR Response Rate 3 (RR3)[3] is also included. The RR3 relies on estimating the proportion of cases of unknown eligibility that may have been eligible for the survey and includes this estimate in the denominator for calculation of the response rate. This adjustment enables a more accurate assessment of the response rate as some households or mobile phone answerers that refuse the screening process would in fact be in-scope. While both response rate definitions are reported at Table 12, the 'AAPOR' response rate is our preferred calculation.

The formula for Response Rate 3 is:

$$RR3 = \frac{I}{(I+P)+(R+NC+O) + e(UH+UO)}$$

Where:

I=Interviews

P=Partial interviews

R=Refusals

NC=Non-contacts

O= Other

e= Estimate of the proportion of unknown outcomes likely to have been in-scope

UH=Unknown, if household / occupied

UO=Unknown, other.

The e value for this survey is calculated as follows …

$$e = \frac{\text{(Interviews) + (Eligible non-interviews)}}{\text{(Interviews) + (Eligible non-interviews) + (Not eligible)}}$$

Table 12: Response rates

	Total	Landline	Mobile
Standard response rate (%)	26.2	31.9	22.3
AAPOR RR3 (%)	**16.2**	**17.0**	**16.7**
Number of interviews	750	375	375
Number of in-scope contacts	1332	898	434
Number of screen outs	786	409	377
Estimated percentage of screen-outs that are in-scope (%)	68.6	73.7	60.0
Estimated number of unscreened refusals that are in-scope	2909	1056	1686
Revised estimated base of in-scope contacts	4623	2205	2251

[3] AAPOR, 2011.

4.4. Quality assurances

4.4.1. Field brief

Interviewers and supervisors working on the study were required to attend a briefing and training session prior to commencing work on data collection. The briefing session covered:

- Survey context, concepts and background;
- Survey procedures (sample management protocols, target respondent identification, response maximisation procedures, etc.);
- Privacy and confidentiality;
- Escalation procedures;
- Respondent liaison issues;
- Refusal aversion techniques;
- Strategies to minimise mid-survey terminations; and
- A detailed examination of the questionnaire, focusing on uniform interpretation of questions and response frames, and addressing item-specific data quality issues.

After the initial briefing session, interviewers engaged in comprehensive practice interviewing and role play, including use of sound-bytes from real interviews to illustrate key points. Additional briefings were held as necessary. Briefing sessions were delivered using PowerPoint slides (see Appendix B) and copies of the survey materials. A total of 58 interviewers were briefed on the Experiences of discrimination survey, with a core team of 31 interviewers conducting 80% of the interviews.

4.4.2. Quality assurance procedures

The in-field quality monitoring techniques employed during survey included:

- Monitoring of each interviewer by a supervisor at least once during their first three shifts on the project and providing comprehensive feedback on data quality issues and respondent liaison techniques;
- Follow up validations and coaching, so that at least 5% of the total interviews are validated (in accordance with ISO 20252 procedures);
- Examination of verbatim responses to open-ended / specified other questions by a member of the coding team;
- Holding a ‘day one review’ to address issues arising from the first live interviewing session including a review of interviewer experiences and conducting thorough checks on interim data collected to date; and
- Holding clarification re-briefings, as the need arises, to address any issues of data quality or consistency of questionnaire administration, and ‘refusal workshops’ to address respondent liaison techniques (as informed by remote monitoring);
- Training interviewers in call alert and escalation procedures.

All data collection activities were undertaken in accordance with the Privacy Act (1988) and the Australian Privacy Principles contained therein, the Privacy (Market and Social Research) Code 2014, the Australian Market and Social Research Society's Code of Professional Practice, and ISO 20252 standards.

4.4.3. Field debrief

In addition to the first day debriefing session, a formal end of field interviewer de-briefing was held on February 15, 2015 after 80% of interviewing had been conducted. The debriefing provided interviewers and supervisors with an opportunity to give feedback on their experiences. A full list of feedback from the end of field debrief session is provided in Appendix C.

4.5. Data preparation

4.5.1. Verbatim cleaning

While no coding of responses was conducted, free-text comments were reviewed and de-identified as per the Social Research Centre standards. Verbatim response review occurred during the course of fieldwork to ensure interviewers received ongoing feedback regarding their quality of data capture.

4.5.2. Weighting

The landline telephone has been a primary mode of surveying the community in Australia since the 1980s. However, similar to what has happened in the United States since 2002, as more of the Australian population has begun to use mobile phones, a sizeable proportion of people have relinquished their landline service altogether. This represents a non-ignorable source of coverage error, though one which can be addressed by adding in a second sampling-frame: mobile phones.

This reduction in coverage bias has a cost in terms of creating sampling error. While single-frame landline sample surveys do not have equal selection probabilities for all respondents, adding in a second frame exacerbates the problem. Some respondents will be contactable in both frames, while others will only be available in one or the other. Additionally, the selection probabilities between the two frames can be quite different. There are many more mobile phones in Australia than landlines (see below) and the profiles of shared devices and multiple lines can mean that there are quite uneven chances of selection for different respondents.

The bias created by this sampling error can be accounted for by weighting. Thus, weighting for dual frame telephone surveys is a two stage process. A design weight (also sometimes called a preweight) is calculated to account for sampling bias which is then post-stratified to conform to external benchmarks to adjust for non-response.

The design weight accounts for the difference in probability for each respondent participating in the survey. Each respondent's weight is the inverse of their probability of selection where the chance of selection is calculated via the following formula:

$$p = \frac{S_{LL}LL}{U_{LL}AD_{LL}} + \frac{S_{MP}MP}{U_{MP}PP_{MP}}$$

Where:

- S_{LL} is the number of survey respondents contacted by landline (375)
- U_{LL} is the population of the universe of landline numbers (estimated as 6,888,151)
- LL indicates the number of landlines in the respondent's household
- AD_{LL} is the number of in-scope adults in the respondent's household
- S_{MP} is the number of survey respondents contacted by mobile (375)
- U_{MP} is the population of the universe of mobile numbers (estimated as 19,590,306)
- MP indicates the number of mobile phones the respondent owns
- PP_{MP} indicates the number of people the respondent shares their phone with

Note that the $\frac{S}{U}$ terms can be thought of as the probability that the respondents' telephone number will be used. LL and MP adjust for the number of chances the respondent gives themselves to have a number that is used, while the AD and PP terms adjust for the possibility that the respondent will not be the one selected by the screening process.

LL, AD_{LL}, MP and PP_{MP} will all come from the respondents' answers to survey questions.

After the design weight is calculated, it is then adjusted to account for non-response error to create a final weight (often called a post stratification weight). For dual-frame surveys, the preferred approach to post stratification weighting is 'raking' (sometimes called rim weighting or iterative proportional fitting). This is the preferred approach as it enables weights to be adjusted so as the weighted sample aligns with external population distributions for several categorical variables at once. In doing so this enables the weighted estimates to reflect the population not only with respect to those attributes commonly adjusted for, such as age, sex and geography, but also to take into account additional parameters such as educational attainment, birthplace and telephone status.

For the Australia's Comparative Advantage study the data have been weighted to account for telephone status, age, state, gender and country of birth. The population benchmarks used and their source can be seen in Table 13 on the following page.

Table 13: Population Benchmarks Used for weighting

Benchmark	%
Telephone status (ACMA)[4]	
Mobile Only	27.3
Landline only	8.0
Dual-user	64.7
Age group (ABS Estimated Resident Population June 2013, 3101.0)	
18-24 years	12.5
25-34 years	18.9
35-44 years	18.0
45-54 years	17.2
55-64 years	14.7
65+ years	18.6
State (ABS Estimated Resident Population June 2013, 3101.0)	
New South Wales	32.1
Victoria	25.0
Queensland	19.8
South Australia	7.3
Western Australia	10.9
Tasmania	2.2
Northern Territory	1.0
Australian Capital Territory	1.7
Gender (ABS Estimated Resident Population June 2013, 3101.0)	
Male	49.3
Female	50.7
Country of birth (ABS Census 2011 Table Builder)	
Australia	64.6
Other English-speaking country	10.5
Non-English –speaking country	24.9

[4] The post-stratification benchmark for telephone status is constructed as follows, 27.3% of Australians have mobile phone only (ACMA, 2014), therefore the remaining 72.7% must own a landline (assuming the proportion of people owning neither is negligible). 89% of people in households with a landline also owning a mobile (ACMA, 2011), so (.89 * .727) 64.7% of people are dual users, leaving 8.0% of Australians as mobile phone only.

References:
Australian Communication and Media Authority. (2011). Communications report 2010–11 series Report 2 – Converging communications channels: Preferences and behaviours of Australian communications users.
Australian Communication and Media Authority. (2014). Communications report 2013–14.

Appendix A: Final questionnaire

ABN 40 143 536 805

Australia's Comparative Advantage

Questionnaire

06/02/2015

Contents

ASSA on behalf of ACOLA – Australia's Comparative Advantage
1327 ACA Questionnaire 06022015 (Clean).Docx

SECTION A: INTRODUCTION

SMS: USE STANDARD SMS LIST
Except for:
13 Refused outright(hard)
14 Soft refusal/Unable to participate
16 Out of Scope
18 LOTE CB,language follow-up required

*(ALL)

A1. Good (morning/afternoon/evening). My name is (….) and I'm calling from the Social Research Centre – part of the Australian National University. We're conducting a brief national study looking at people's opinions on how the government spends taxation money.

(IF NECESSARY: This project is funded by the Australian Council of Learned Academies (ACOLA). The Australian Council of Learned Academies (ACOLA) is an independent, not-for-profit organisation that supports evidence-based research to inform national policy and to develop solutions to complex global problems and emerging national needs.)

ACOLA is made up of Australia's four independent Learned Academies –Humanities, Science, Social Sciences and Technological Sciences and Engineering.)

1. Continue

*(SAMTYP=1 – LANDLINE)

A1a. For the study, we would like to speak to the person in your household who is aged 18 years or over and who had the LAST birthday? Would that be you?

(REINTRODUCE IF NECESSARY: Good (morning/afternoon/evening). My name is (….) and I'm calling from the Social Research Centre – part of the Australian National University. We're conducting a brief national study looking at people's opinions on how the government spends taxation money.

(IF NECESSARY: This project is funded by the Australian Council of Learned Academies (ACOLA)The Australian Council of Learned Academies (ACOLA) is an independent, not-for-profit organisation that supports evidence-based research to inform national policy and to develop solutions to complex global problems and emerging national needs.)

ACOLA is made up of Australia's four independent Learned Academies –Humanities, Science, Social Sciences and Technological Sciences and Engineering.)

1. Continue
2. Make appointment (MAKE APPOINTMENT)
3. Household refusal (GO TO RR1)
4. Selected respondent refusal (GO TO RR1)
5. No one aged 18+ in household (GO TO TERM1)
6. Queried why landline was called (GO TO PTELQ)
7. (Back to SMS)

*(A1a=6 – QUERIED WHY LANDLINE WAS CALLED)

PTELQ

(IF NECESSARY: Your telephone number has been chosen at random from all possible telephone numbers in your area. We find that this is the best way to obtain a representative sample of people across Australia).

1. Snap back to previous question

*(SAMTYP=2 – MOBILE)

A1b. For this study, we are interested in talking to people aged 18 or over. Can I check, are you aged 18 years or over?

1. Yes
2. Make appointment (GO TO S2)
3. Mobile phone answerer refusal (GO TO RR1)1
4.
5. Under 18 years of age (GO TO TERM1)
6. Queried why mobile was called (GO TO MOBINFO)
7. (Back to SMS)

*(A1b=6 – QUERIED WHY MOBILE WAS CALLED)

MOBINFO. One of the issues currently facing telephone survey researchers in Australia is the increasing proportion of households without a landline telephone. We are calling mobile phones as well as landlines so we can get a representative sample of people across Australia.

1. Snap back to previous question

*(SAMTYP=2 – MOBILE)

S2. Just so I know your time zone, can you tell me which state you're in?

1. NSW
2. VIC
3. QLD
4. SA
5. WA
6. TAS
7. NT
8. ACT
9. (Refused)

*(SAMTYP=2 – MOBILE)

S1. May I just check whether or not it is safe for you to take this call at the moment? If not, I am happy to call you back when it is more convenient for you.

1. Safe to take call
2. Not safe to take call (GO To S2 THEN MOB_APPT)
3. Respondent refusal (GO TO RR1)

*(S1=2 OR A1b=2 – MOBILE)

MOB_APPT Do you want me to call you back on this number or would you prefer I call back on another phone?

1. This number (STOP, MAKE APPOINTMENT)
2. Home phone (STOP, MAKE APPOINTMENT, RECORD HOME PHONE NUMBER)
3. Respondent refusal (GO TO RR1)

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*(ALL)

A2. The survey will take about 15 minutes to complete and is funded by the Australian Council of Learned Academies (ACOLA). I'll ask you questions about how governments spend our taxes and if governments spend the right amounts on the right things. We'll also look at possible new policies and reforms and if you would support these particular policies and reforms.

It is not a test, so there are no right or wrong answers. This study is completely confidential and is conducted in accordance with the Privacy Act and Australian Privacy Principles. If there are any questions you don't want to answer, just tell me so I can skip over them. Participation is voluntary and you are free to terminate the interview at any time.

Are you willing to help us with this study?

(IF NECESSARY: The Australian Council of Learned Academies (ACOLA) is an independent, not-for-profit organisation that supports evidence-based research to inform national policy and to develop solutions to complex global problems and emerging national needs.)

(ACOLA is made up of Australia's four independent Learned Academies –Humanities, Science, Social Sciences and Technological Sciences and Engineering.)

1. Continue
2. Make appointment (MAKE APPOINTMENT)
3. Respondent refusal (GO TO RR1)

*(ALL)

MON. Thanks very much. Just letting you know, this call may be monitored by my supervisor for quality assurance purposes. Please tell me if you don't want this to happen.

1. Monitoring allowed
2. Monitoring not permitted

*(ALL)

A3. Just to confirm are you an:

1. Australian resident
2. Australian citizen
3. Currently on a VISA of some sort (GO TO TERM1)
4. (Don't know) (GO TO TERM1)
5. (Refused) (GO TO TERM1)

TS_1 (TIMESTAMP SECTION A)

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SECTION B: GOVERNMENT SERVICES

*(ALL)
PB5. To start off I want to ask about your level of support for POSSIBLE policies that a government COULD consider for the future. Try to think about the policy type generally.

1. Continue

*(ALL)
B5. To what extent do you support or oppose the following possible policies.

(STATEMENTS)
(ROTATE A TO G)

a. Lift public infrastructure spending such as road, rail, electricity etc.
b. Lift government funding in higher education.
c. Lift government funding of vocational education and training
d. Lift Net Overseas Migration with a greater focus on skilled migrants.
e. Pursue better child care support to boost female labour force participation.
f. Undertake labour force reforms to boost labour force participation in mature ages.
g. Adopt policies to encourage greater innovation and research and development.

(RESPONSE OPTIONS)
(DO NOT READ OUT)
(PROBE: STRONGLY SUPPORT/ OPPOSE OR SOMEWHAT SUPPORT / OPPOSE)
1. Strongly oppose
2. Somewhat oppose
3. (Neutral)
4. Somewhat support
5. Strongly support
6. (Don't know)
7. (Refused)
8. (Does not comprehend)

*(IF 2+ B5=5 – STRONGLY SUPPORT AT LEAST 2 POLICY CHANGES)
B5x. Of the policies you strongly support here, which do you think is the most important and which is the second most important?

(PROGRAMMER NOTE: DISPLAY B5 STATEMENTS IF = 5 AND COLLECT RANK ORDER OF FIRST AND SECOND MOST IMPORTANT)

1. Display option form B5
2. (Can't decide) (AVOID)

*(ALL)
PB6. Now I want to ask you for your opinion about your support in general for some further possible reforms that a government could consider for the future

1. Continue

*(ALL)

B6. To what extent do you support or oppose the following possible reforms.

(STATEMENTS)
(ROTATE A TO E)

a. More pro-competition reforms and reductions in regulation.
b. Increase GST to fund more public spending and reduce deficits
c. Increase GST to allow cuts in personal income tax rates and/or corporate taxes.
d. Reduce remaining tariffs, import controls and foreign investment restrictions.
e. Greater labour market flexibility from new industrial relations reforms.

(RESPONSE OPTIONS)
(DO NOT READ OUT) (PROBE: STRONGLY SUPPORT/ OPPOSE OR SOMEWHAT SUPPORT / OPPOSE)

1. Strongly oppose
2. Somewhat oppose
3. (Neutral)
4. Somewhat support
5. Strongly support
6. (Don't know)
7. (Refused)
8. (Does not comprehend)

*(IF 2+ B6=5 – STRONGLY SUPPORT AT LEAST 2 POLICY CHANGES)

B6x. Of the reforms you strongly support here, which do you think is the most important and which is the second most important?

(PROGRAMMER NOTE: DISPLAY B6 STATEMENTS IF = 5 AND COLLECT RANK ORDER OF FIRST AND SECOND MOST IMPORTANT)

1. Display option form B5
2. (Can't decide) (AVOID)

*(ALL)

PB4. Next, we'd like to give you some scenarios around government spending and put dollar figures on how much you would be prepared to pay in taxes to provide the level of public services that you support.

1. Continue

*(ALL)

B4a. In order to do that, I need to get a general idea of your household's income.

Before tax is taken out, which of the following ranges best describes your approximate total HOUSEHOLD income, from all sources, including private income, superannuation, and any government income support, over the last 12 months?

*PROGRAMMER NOTE: MEAN TAX USED FOR CALCULATION OF BDUM, NOT TO BE DISPLAYED)
(READ OUT)

1. Less than $40,000 (Mean tax: $7,447)
2. $40,000 to less than $60,000 (Mean tax: $11,732)
3. $60,000 to less than $100,000 (Mean tax: $18,496)
4. $100,000 to less than $175,000 (Mean tax: $29,957)
5. $175,000 or more (Mean tax: $62,080)
6. (Refused)

*(IF B4a=6 – REFUSED)

B4b. That's fine. In answering the next few questions I would like you to assume your HOUSEHOLD has the average Australian household income of just over $100,000 (DO NOT DISPLAY: Mean tax: $25,201).

IF NECESSARY: THE ACTUAL AVERAGE IS $100,806

1. Continue

*(ALL)

PB2. First, I'm going to read out a number of different areas that government currently funds through taxes. I'd like you to say whether there should be MORE or LESS public expenditure in each area.

Please bear in mind that:

- Please bear in mind that if you say 'more' it could require a tax increase, and if you say 'less' it could require a reduction in those services.

1. Continue

*(ALL)
(PROGRAMMER NOTE: PAIR B2 AND B4c STATEMENTS AND LOOP.)

B2. Do you think governments should spend <u>more</u> or <u>less</u> money on…?

(STATEMENTS)
(ROTATE A TO K)

a. Defence
b. Public order and safety
c. Schooling (primary & secondary)
d. Tertiary education (University, TAFE, etc.)
e. Health
f. Social security for seniors
g. Other social security and welfare (incl. job seeking, disability, etc.)
h. Housing, water and environment (incl. community development & sanitation)
i. Recreation and culture
j. Support of industry sectors (energy; agriculture; and mining, manufacturing and construction)
k. Transport and communications
l. General public services (Fed, State and Local Government)

(RESPONSE OPTIONS)
(DO NOT READ: PROBE: A LOT OR A LITTLE)

1. A lot less
2. A little less
3. (Same)
4. A little more
5. A lot more
6. (Don't know)
7. (Refused)

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*(ALL)

BDUM. PROGRAMMER NOTE: create numeric value 'BDUM: current payable tax' based on the percent below multiplied by the 'mean tax' of salary group from B4a OR from mean tax of B4b. Round to nearest $100.

Category	%
a. Defence	4.2%
b. Public order and safety	5.2%
c. Schooling (primary & secondary)	8.3%
d. Tertiary education (University, TAFE, etc.)	8.0%
e. Health	20.9%
f. Social security for seniors	10.6%
g. Other social security and welfare (incl. job seeking & disability, etc.)	19.4%
h. Housing, water and environment (incl. community development & sanitation)	4.5%
i. Recreation and culture	2.7%
j. Support of industry sectors (energy; agriculture; and mining, manufacturing and construction)	3.3%
k. Transport and communications	6.1%
l. General public services (Fed, State and Local Government)	6.8%

*(IF B2=1 OR 2 OR 4 OR 5 – THINKS GOVT SHOULD SPEND MORE OR LESS ON EACH ACTIVITY)

B4c. Currently, HOUSEHOLDS with a similar income to yours pay around [BDUM_a] dollars on <insert question B2_a> in taxes of all kinds (including income tax and GST).

In YOUR opinion, how much should your HOUSEHOLD actually pay towards <insert question B2_a>?

[PROGRAMMER NOTE: LOOP B4c_a to B4c_l AND MATCH WITH B2_a to B2_l AND BDUM_a to BDUM_l]

(STATEMENTS)
(ROTATE A TO K)
a. Defence
b. Public order and safety
c. Schooling (primary & secondary)
d. Tertiary education (University, TAFE, etc.)
e. Health
f. Social security for seniors
g. Other social security and welfare (incl. job seeking & disability, etc.)
h. Housing, water and environment (incl. community development & sanitation)
i. Recreation and culture
j. Support of industry sectors (energy; agriculture; and mining, manufacturing and construction)
k. Transport and communications
l. General public services (Fed, State and Local Government)

(RESPONSE OPTION)
1. (ENTER VALUE) [RANGE: 0 to 100,000]
2. (Don't know)
3. (Refused)

*(ALL)

BNOM. PROGRAMMER NOTE: create dummy numeric variable 'BNOM: total amount nominated' based on sum of B4c_a to B4c_l

*(ALL)
BCUR. PROGRAMMER NOTE: create dummy numeric variable 'BCUR: total amount current' based on sum of BDUM_a to BDUM_l

*(ALL)
BFIN. PROGRAMMER NOTE: create dummy numeric variable 'BFIN: implied increase or decrease in taxes' based on sum of BNOM minus BCUR.

*(ALL)
B3 And if all of these changes led to an increase in tax for EVERYONE, would you…

(READ OUT)

1. Be willing to pay whatever was required
2. Be willing to pay a little more
3. NOT be willing to pay more
4. (Don't know)
5. (Refused)

TS_2 (TIMESTAMP SECTION B)

SECTION C: DEMOGRAPHICS

*(ALL)
PC1. Finally, I have some questions about you.

1. Continue

*(ALL)
C1. Record gender
(ONLY ASK IF AMBIGUOUS)

1. Male
2. Female
3. (Other)
4. (Refused)

*(ALL)
C2. What is your country of birth?

1. Australia
1. New Zealand
2. UK/Ireland
3. Greece
4. Italy
5. Other Europe (SPECIFY)
6. India
7. China
8. Asia (SPECIFY)
9. USA/Canada
10. Other (SPECIFY)
11. (Refused)

*(ALL)
C3. Into which of the following age brackets do you fall?

(READ OUT)
1. 18-24 years
2. 25-34 years
3. 35-44 years
4. 45-54 years
5. 55-64 years
6. 65+ years
7. (Refused)

*(ALL)
C4. Which of the following best describes your household?

1. One person with no dependants
2. Couple with no dependants
3. One person with dependant(s)
4. Couple with dependant(s)
5. Group household
6. Other (SPECIFY)
7. (Refused)

*(ALL)
C5. Which of these categories best describes the highest education qualification that you have completed?

1. Primary school only
2. Some secondary school
3. School Certificate, Intermediate or equivalent
4. Higher School Certificate, (Leaving or Matric)
5. TAFE or other trade or technical qualification
6. University or CAE Degree or Diploma
7. (Refused)

*(ALL)
C6. Which of the following best describes your work status?

1. Employed full-time
2. Employed part-time or casual
3. Home duties
4. Retired
5. Unemployed
6. Not working (student, unable to work)
7. (Refused)

*(ALL)
C7. Could you please tell me the postcode of the area in which you live?

(IF NECESSARY: It is important that we collect this information so we can analyse the results at a local level)

1. [ENTER POSTCODE]
2. (Refused)

***TELEPHONE STATUS**

*(ALL)
PSMP1 Now just a few questions about your use of telephone services to help us understand differences in households we are speaking to across Australia.

1. Continue

*(SAMTYP=2 – MOBILE SAMPLE)
SMP1 Is there at least one working fixed line telephone inside your home that is used for making and receiving calls?

1. Yes
2. No
3. (Don't know)
4. (Refused)

*(SAMTYP=1 OR SMP1=1 – LL SAMPLE OR MOB SAMPLE WITH LL AT HOME)
DEM1a. Including yourself, how many people aged 18 years and over live in your household?

(PROGRAMMER NOTE: ALLOW RESPONSES 1-20. DISPLAY 'UNLIKELY RESPONSE' IF ANSWER IS GREATER THAN 10)

1. Number given (Specify___) (RANGE 1 TO 20)
2. (Don't know)
3. (Refused)

*(SAMTYP=1 OR SMP1=1 – LL SAMPLE OR MOB SAMPLE WITH LL AT HOME)

SMP2 How many residential phone numbers do you have in your household not including lines dedicated to faxes, modems or business phone numbers? Do not include mobile phones.

(INTERVIEWER NOTE: If needed explain as how many individual landline numbers are there at your house that you can use to make and receive calls?)

1. Number of lines (Specify_____) RECORD WHOLE NUMBER (ALLOWABLE RANGE 1 TO 15) *(DISPLAY "UNLIKELY RESPONSE" IF >3)
2. (Don't know)
3. (Refused)

*(SAMTYP=1 – LANDLINE SAMPLE)

SMP3 Do you also have a working mobile phone?

1. Yes
2. No
3. (Don't know)
4. (Refused)

*(SAMTYP=2 OR SMP3=1 – MOBILE SAMPLE OR LL WITH A MOBILE)

SMP1d. How many mobile phones, in total, do you have that you receive calls on?

1. Specify number (RANGE 1 TO 9)
2. (Don't know)
3. (Refused)

*(SAMTYP=2 OR SMP3=1 – MOBILE SAMPLE OR LL WITH A MOBILE)

SMP1a Does anybody else share this/these mobile phone(s) with you?

1. Yes
2. No
3. (Don't know)
4. (Refused)

*(SMP1a=1 – SOMEONE ELSE ANSWERS CALLS)

SMP1b How many OTHER people share this/these phone(s)?

1. Specify number (RANGE 1 TO 9)
2. (Don't know)
3. (Refused)

*(ALL)

TELDUM TELEPHONE STATUS

1. Mobile only (SMP1 = 2, 3, 4)
2. Landline only (SMP3 = 2, 3, 4)
3. Dual user (SMP1 = 1 OR SMP3 = 1)

*(ALL)

C8. That's the end of the questions. Are there any comments you would like to add in regard to this study?

1. Yes (Specify: full verbatim)
2. No

TS_3 (TIMESTAMP SECTION C)

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SECTION D: RECONTACT & CLOSE

*(ALL)

R1. The researchers may carry out a follow-up study relating to this topic in the future. Would you be happy to be contacted again to participate in a future study?

(IF NECESSARY: If you agree to re-contact now you are not obliged to participate in the future, participation in any future studies is completely voluntary.)

1. Yes
2. No

*(R1=1 – AGREED TO RECONTACT)

R2fn. Could you please tell me your first name?

1. (Specify)

*(R1=1 – AGREED TO RECONTACT)

R2e. Do you have an email address?

1. Yes (SPECIFY EMAIL ADDRESS)
2. No

*(R1=1 – AGREED TO RECONTACT)

R2tel. Is the telephone number you are currently on your preferred number?
<DISPLAY TELNUM>

1. Yes
2. No – (ENTER NEW TELNUM INCLUDING AREA CODE)

*(R1=1 – AGREED TO RECONTACT)

R2alt And do you have an alternative number we could contact you on next time?

1. Yes – ENTER NEW ALTNUM (INCLUDE AREA CODE)
2. No

*(R1=1 – AGREED TO RECONTACT)

R3 Can I confirm that you consent to us passing on your contact details to the Australian Council of Learned Academies (ACOLA) as part of this possible future research?

They will be sent separate from your survey responses.

1. Yes
2. No

*(ALL)

CLOSE. That's the end of the survey. Thank you very much for your participation. Your answers will make an important contribution to our understanding of government decisions about how best to spend our taxes.

This research was carried out in compliance with the Privacy Act and the Australian Privacy Principles, and the information you have provided will only be used for research purposes. Our Privacy Policy is available via our website, www.srcentre.com.au, if you require further information please click on the Privacy Policy in the right hand menu.

Just in case you missed it, my name is (……) calling from the Social Research Centre on behalf of the Australian Council of Learned Academies (ACOLA).

1. Close

TS_4 (TIMESTAMP SECTION D)

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***TERMINATION SCRIPTS**

RR1 (USE STANDARD REASON FOR REFUSAL LIST)

TERM1. Thanks but we need to speak with Australian residents aged 18 years or older.

ALLTERM

Code	Definition	Description	Category
1		Completed interview	Interviews
2	A1a=3	Household refusal	Refusals
3	A1a=4	Respondent refusal	Refusals
4	A1a=5	No one in household in scope	Screen outs
5	A1b=3	Mobile answerer refusal	Refusals
6	A1b=4	Mobile respondent not in scope	Screen outs
7	S1=3	Mobile respondent refusal (safety question)	Refusals
8	MOB_APPT=3	Mobile respondent refusal (call back question)	Refusals
9	A2=3	Respondent refusal	Refusals
10	S2=9	Refused state	Refusals
11	All other	Midway termination	Refusals
12	A3=4-5	Non-Resident screen out	Screen outs
13	SMS reply=1	SMS opt out	Refusals

Appendix:

Household Gross Income and Taxes Paid
(mean annual household gross income by quintile, $2013/14)

Mean- tax- estimate band
31,030- 7,447- <$40,000
55865- 11,732- $40-60,000
80,419- 18,496- $60-100,000
115,222- 29,957 $100-175,000
221,716- 62,080 $175,000+

100,806- $25,201-'just over $100,000'

Source: ABS 6537.0 updated by growth in national income per capita 2009-10 to 2013-14.

Government Benefits, Taxes and Household Income
Used to calculate BDUM proportions by category
Source: http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6537.0Main+Features22009-10?OpenDocument

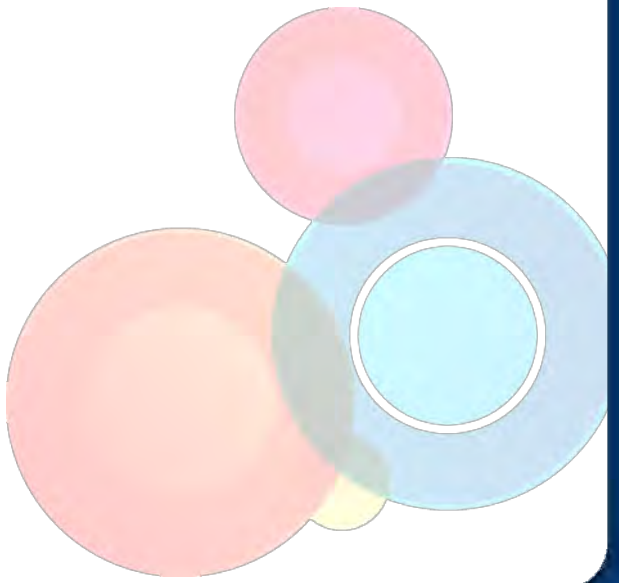
Appendix B: Briefing notes

THE SOCIAL RESEARCH CENTRE

"Australia's Comparative Advantage"

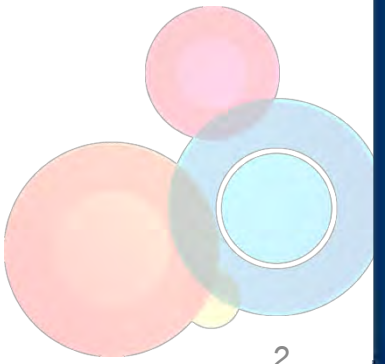
ACOLA
AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF LEARNED ACADEMIES
SECRETARIAT

February 2015



Agenda

- Background
  - Project overview
  - Survey procedures
- Respondent liaison
- Survey run through
- Practice interviews
- Interviewing



Project background

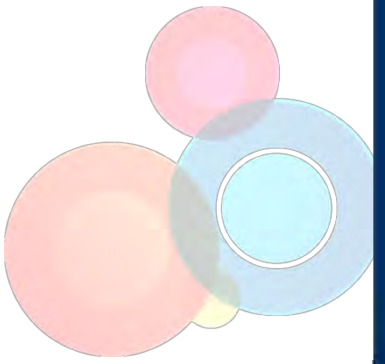
- "Australia's Comparative Advantage" (ACA): National general community public preference study
  - Part of larger government program, Securing Australia's Future, coordinated by the Australian Council of Learned Academies (ACOLA)
- The ACA project aims to:
  - Identify Australia's strengths and comparative advantages
  - Establish which contexts and policy settings encourage creativity, adaptability and innovation; and
  - Explore the natural, social, geographical, economic, cultural and scientific attributes and capabilities needed to thrive as a nation.
- **Current study purpose:**
  - Survey community attitudes about how governments spend our taxes and what changes in policy might help improve outcomes for Australians.

Research approach

- RDD CATI survey
  - Dual frame (landline and mobile)
  - No pilot (1 day in field, 1 day pause)
  - Pre-SMS to mobile sample
- Target audience:
  - Australian residents
  - Aged 18 or older
  - ‘Last birthday’ method for landline

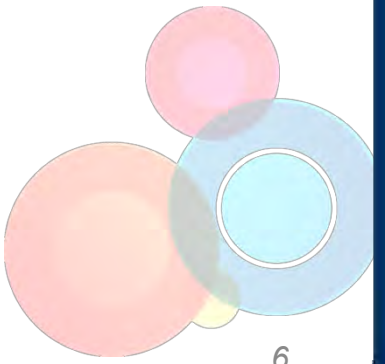
Field overview

- Interview length: 15 minutes
- Target interviews (50:50 mobile & landline): 800
- Fieldwork
  - Feb 3: test launch & first shift debrief
  - Feb 4: pause; interim data file in the morning
  - Feb 5: resume fieldwork
  - Feb 16 (TBC): debriefing
  - Feb 22: end of fieldwork (fixed)



Call procedures

- Up to 4 calls for mobiles and 6 for landlines to establish contact
  - Additional calls for hard appointments
- Standard household interviewing hours apply
  - Limited interviewing expected during business hours by appointment
  - Late shifts calling into WA
- Project specific procedures:
  - No LOTEs
  - No refusal conversion
  - No messages on answering machines / voicemail



Respondent Liaison

Challenges

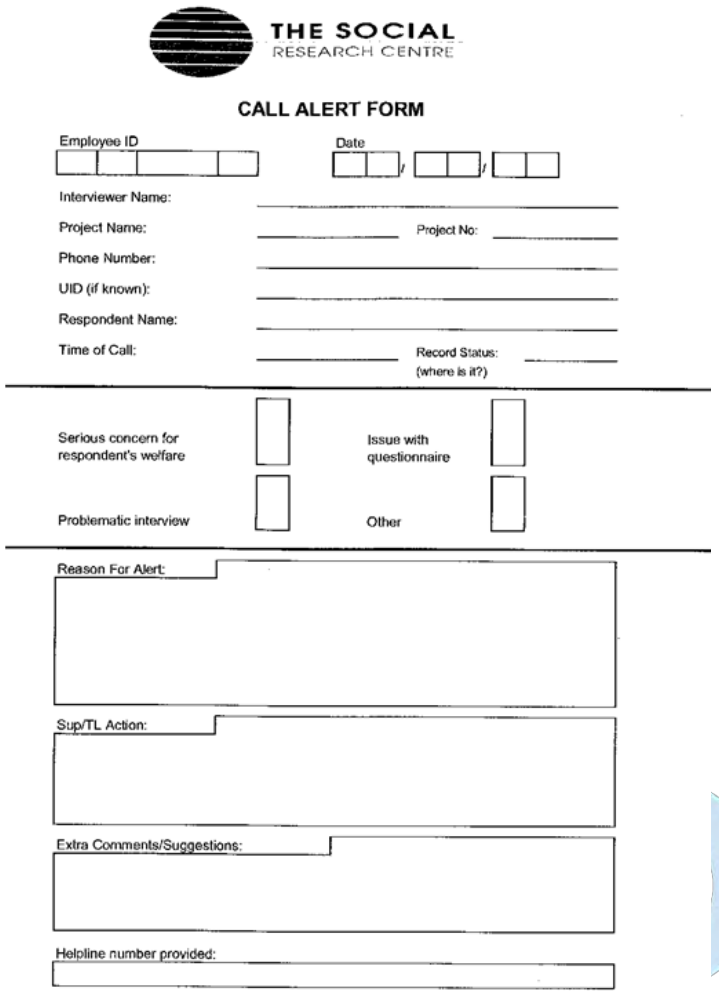
- Questionnaire
  - Mostly straight forward opinion based questions
  - Complex questions around **household** taxable income & dollar values assigned to areas of government spending
  - 'Catch-all' question for comments at the end of the questionnaire
- Data quality issues
  - Consistent delivery
- Potentially provocative subject matter
  - Dealing with passionate respondents on the topic of government spending and national policy
  - Potential to exceed interview length if respondent becomes overly conversational

Dealing with Respondents

- If respondent starts to go 'off track':
  - Acknowledge their opinion but direct them back to the survey questions
  - Never offer any personal opinions
  - Be neutral in question delivery
  - Remain professional and keep the survey moving
  - Remind them that we can capture additional comments at the end of the survey
- If respondents become aggressive:
  - Remind them that the purpose of the survey is to understand community attitudes about how governments spend our taxes
  - If they want to make a complaint about the **survey** (not about how their taxes are spend) complete a call alert form

Possible escalations

- Respondents might become agitated based on the subject matter
- If the situation escalates, hand over to a supervisor
- At the conclusion of a stressful call, Call Alert Forms should be completed as procedure →



THE SOCIAL RESEARCH CENTRE

CALL ALERT FORM

Employee ID

Date

Interviewer Name:

Project Name:

Project No:

Phone Number:

UID (if known):

Respondent Name:

Time of Call:

Record Status: (where is it?)

Serious concern for respondent's welfare

Issue with questionnaire

Problematic interview

Other

Reason For Alert:

Sup/TL Action:

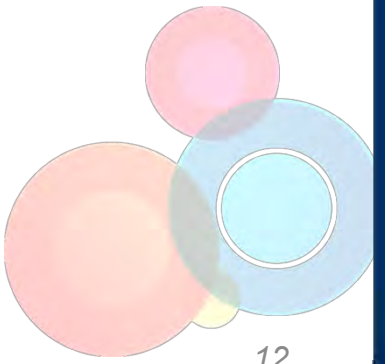
Extra Comments/Suggestions:

Helpline number provided:

Survey Overview

Survey outline

- (A) Introduction & consent
  - Introduce study, gain consent & establish eligibility
- (B) Government services
  - Opinion of services funded through taxes
  - Preferred household contribution in taxes
  - Opinion of hypothetical policies and reforms
- (C) Demographics
  - Standard demographic questions
  - Telephone status questions
- (D) Re-contact & close
  - Possible follow-up study

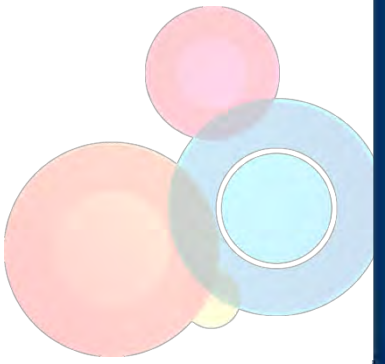


Key Survey Characteristics

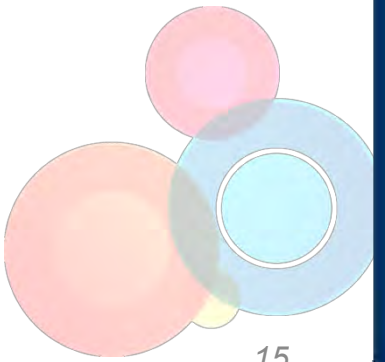
- PB2 (more/less public expenditure on services)
  - Important that the respondent understands 'more' would mean an increase in the volume or quality of services which might increase tax payments and vice versa.
- B4a (total household income estimate)
  - Emphasis this is **household** income and an **estimate** is fine (response will be used to calculate dollar values in B4c)
  - B4b - If refused at B4a, respondent can present they earn the average Australian household income (ABS 2013-14: $100,806)
- B4c (increase/decrease tax contribution)
  - Statements displayed where respondent said increase/decrease at B2
  - May feel repetitive; important to be clear in your delivery & capture whole dollar values only
  - Keep an eye out for inconsistent responses & confirm with respondent
    - E.g. 'You said there should be MORE spent on <activity> but you gave a value that's lower?

Key Survey Characteristics

- B5/B6 (Support for govt. policies and reforms)
  - Important to explain these policies and reforms are hypothetical and for the purpose of the study only
  - Encourage respondent to think about the statement ‘in general’
- B5x/B6x (Strongly support at least 2 statements)
  - Try to probe for ‘most important’ and ‘second most important’ for ranking
  - If respondent is certain that they can’t choose a rank order select ‘Can’t decide’
- C8 (Catch-all)
  - Try to collect comments relevant to the study
  - Keep in mind time limits, use phrases like “short comments”



Questionnaire run-through . . .



Appendix C: Debriefing notes

ACA: Interviewer debrief notes

16 February, 2015

A1

Some interviewers noted that the description of the survey content was not specific enough at A1 to engage respondents upon initial contact.

Suggestion: *Include more about survey content A1. E.g. "We're conducting a brief national study looking how governments spend our taxes and if they spend the right amounts on the right things. We're also looking at possible new policies and reforms and if the community would support these policies and reforms."*

A2

Interviewers indicated that A2 took a little time to read and often respondents would lose interest, particularly during the compliance section around voluntary participation, right to withdraw, and privacy.

Suggestion: *Split A2 into two scripts. Keep A2a short and focused on the survey. A2b could then be read after a respondent agrees to participate with more information about the respondent's rights.*

E.g. A2a "The survey will take about 15 minutes to complete and is funded by the Australian Council of Learned Academies (ACOLA). Are you willing to help us with this study?" If Yes, continue to A2b.

A2b. "Thank you. Before we begin I just need to let you know that this study is completely confidential and is conducted in accordance with the Privacy Act and Australian Privacy Principles. If there are any questions you don't want to answer, just tell me so I can skip over them. Participation is voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the interview at any time."

A3

Just to confirm are you an:

There was some confusion around resident/citizen definition with respondents sometimes saying yes to both options. In these situations interviewers probed out responses and simplified the question to clarify if the respondent was born in Australia or if they were a permanent resident.

Suggestion: *Simplify question to ask directly about being an Australian resident for tax purposes – 'yes' or 'no'.*

B5

To what extent do you support or oppose the following possible policies:

There was some confusion around use of the term 'lift' which appears in many statements (e.g. "Lift public infrastructure spending such as road, rail, electricity etc."). Some respondents thought this meant 'remove' rather than increase.

Suggestion: *Reword to 'increase' or 'raise' for clarity.*

B5_F

To what extent do you support or oppose the following possible policies: Undertake labour force reforms to boost labour force participation in mature ages.

The term 'mature ages' was not always clear to respondents as some thought it meant 'post school leavers', and others thought it was referring to those aged 55 and over. There was also some uncertainty about if the statement was referring to providing job opportunities or increasing retirement age.

Suggestion: Provide additional information for interviewers to respond to queries.

B6

To what extent do you support or oppose the following possible reforms.

Interviewers noted several mid-way terminations and slowing down of interview pace at this point due to the use of political language and lack of understanding. Compared to B5 there were quite a few 'Don't know' and 'Does not comprehend' responses. Respondents recognised familiar terms like GST and were able to comment with relative ease; compared to phrases like 'tariffs' or 'industrial relations reforms'

Suggestion: Simplify language for general community comprehension.

B4A

Before tax is taken out, which of the following ranges best describes your approximate total HOUSEHOLD income, from all sources, including private income, superannuation, and any government income support, over the last 12 months?

Several respondents refused to provide a response at B4a and refused to accept the average household income as an assumed income to assist in responding to the rest of the survey. As a result, the remainder of section B was difficult to administer.

Suggestion: Consideration should be given to allowing respondents to refuse the average income and potentially terminate from the survey or skip the remainder of Section B.

B2

Do you think governments should spend more or less money on…?

Respondents often had different opinions on expenditure within activity which had been grouped together. For example, "Housing, water and environment" – a respondent might want to spend less on housing but more on environment; similarly, "Support of industry sectors (energy; agriculture; and mining, manufacturing and construction) often resulted in conflicting responses.

Suggestion: Potentially expand expenditure areas list to accommodate variance in opinions.

B4C

In YOUR opinion, how much should your HOUSEHOLD actually pay towards <insert question B2_a>?

Providing a dollar figure amount was sometimes difficult for respondents without additional information such as the proportions for each category or how much tax they paid in total. As a result there were some 'Don't know' responses at B4c.

Suggestion: Consideration could be given to providing additional information to respondents or providing a percentage figure rather than a dollar figure.

C8

That's the end of the questions. Are there any comments you would like to add in regard to this study?

Interviewers felt this question was useful for keeping respondents on track however they had to remind respondents to keep their comments to 1-2 sentences to keep the interview length within reason. Responses included detailed feedback about the survey questions and structure, as well as government spending.

Suggestion: NA.