

Monday, 20 March 2017

Turnbull (49%) easily leads Shorten (32%) as ‘Better PM’ but poor approval ratings for both leaders

Now 49% (up 2% from October 2016) of Australian electors prefer Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull as ‘Better Prime Minister’ ahead of Opposition Leader Bill Shorten 32% (unchanged) according to a special telephone Morgan Poll conducted over three nights last week, March 14-16, 2017 with an Australia-wide cross-section of 534 electors.

However, both leaders have a majority of electors disapproving of their job performance. Prime Minister Turnbull’s approval rating as Prime Minister was virtually unchanged at 30% (down 1%) and his disapproval rating also virtually unchanged at 54% (up 1%) while Opposition Leader Bill Shorten’s approval rating was down 3% to 28% (down 1%) and his disapproval rating soared, up 7% to 56%.

Preferred Prime Minister

Analysis by Gender – Turnbull holds similar lead amongst both men and women

Men: Turnbull 49% (up 2%) cf. Shorten 34% (up 1%). Lead to Mr. Turnbull 15% (up 1%);

Women: Turnbull 49% (up 2%) cf. Shorten 30% (down 1%). Lead to Mr. Turnbull 19% (up 3%).

Analysis by Party – Turnbull leads among L-NP electors and Shorten well ahead with ALP electors

L-NP supporters: Turnbull 92% (up 6%) cf. Shorten 2% (down 2%). Lead to Mr. Turnbull 90% (up 8%);

ALP supporters: Turnbull 20% (up 6%) cf. Shorten 65% (unchanged). Lead to Mr. Shorten 45% (down 6%);

Greens supporters: Turnbull 16% (down 6%) cf. Shorten 60% (up 6%). Lead to Mr. Shorten 44% (up 12%);

*One Nation supporters: Turnbull 42% (up 9%) cf. Shorten 23% (up 8%). Lead to Mr Turnbull 19 (up 1%)%;

*Ind/Others supporters: Turnbull 58% (up 7%) cf. Shorten 12% (down 13%). Lead to Mr. Turnbull 46% (up 20%).

Analysis by State – Turnbull leads across all States except Victoria and Tasmania

NSW: Turnbull 51% (up 7%) cf. Shorten 27% (down 9%). Lead to Mr. Turnbull 24% (up 16%);

Victoria: Turnbull 42% (down 1%) cf. Shorten 42% (up 10%). Lead to Mr. Turnbull 0% (down 11%);

Queensland: Turnbull 60% (up 9%) cf. Shorten 22% (unchanged). Lead to Mr. Turnbull 38% (up 9%);

WA: Turnbull 47% (down 3%) cf. Shorten 32% (up 2%). Lead to Mr. Turnbull 15% (down 5%);

*SA: Turnbull 52% (up 1%) cf. Shorten 29% (down 8%). Lead to Mr. Turnbull 23% (up 9%);

*Tasmania: Turnbull 23% (down 30%) cf. Shorten 63% (up 30%). Lead to Mr. Shorten 40% (up 60%);

Job Performance – Approve/Disapprove

Less than a third of Australian electors, 30% (down 1%) approve of Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull’s handling of his job as Prime Minister while 54% (up 1%) disapprove and 16% (unchanged) can’t say.

A clear majority of men, 56% (down 2%) disapprove of Turnbull’s handling of the job as Prime Minister compared to less than a third of men 31% (down 2%) who approve. Over half, 53% (up 5%), of women disapprove of Turnbull’s handling of the job compared to only 30% (up 2%) who approve.

Australian electors have a similarly poor view of Opposition Leader Bill Shorten’s handling of his job as Opposition Leader. A majority, 56% (up 7%) disapprove, while only 28% (down 3%) approve and a large number of electors, 16% (down 4%), can’t say.

Neither gender is impressed with Shorten's handling of the job with well over a half of all men 57% (up 8%) disapproving of Opposition Leader Bill Shorten's handling of the job while 30% (down 5%) approve. Among women 56% (up 8%) disapprove cf. 27% (down 4%) approve.

Gary Morgan says:

"Today's special telephone Morgan Poll reveals bad news for both major party political leaders in Australia. While Malcolm Turnbull is clearly preferred over Bill Shorten as Prime Minister (49% cf. 32%), a majority of electors disapprove of the job performance of both leaders. Turnbull is clearly preferred to Shorten in four States (NSW, Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia) whereas Shorten draws level with Turnbull in his home-state of Victoria and leads in Tasmania.

"A clear majority 54% (up 1%) of electors disapprove of Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull's handling of his job compared to only 30% (down 1%) who approve while an even larger majority of Australian electors, 56% (up 7%) disapprove of Opposition Leader Bill Shorten's handling of his job with only 28% (down 3%) approving. Clearly, neither leader inspires any confidence in the Australian electorate.

"In addition, a separate telephone Morgan Poll conducted in conjunction with this 'Better Prime Minister' survey shows that two women – Deputy Liberal Leader Julie Bishop and Deputy ALP Leader Tanya Plibersek are for the second straight survey nominated by Australian electors as the preferred leader of both major parties. Bishop (30%) is preferred over Turnbull (27%) as L-NP Coalition Leader and Plibersek (26%) is preferred over Albanese (19%) and Shorten (15%) as ALP Leader.

"The key difference between both major parties in terms of leadership is that the Liberal Leadership can change at a moment's notice if two MPs call for a leadership spill and that motion is seconded whereas there is no prospect of a change in ALP Leadership before the next Federal Election, due in mid-2019, unless Shorten decides to resign for whatever reason.

"The way the rules are for determining leadership in both parties means it is perhaps increasingly likely that closer to the next Federal Election the Liberal Party will follow the formula used in late 2015 when they replaced unpopular then Prime Minister Tony Abbott with Turnbull and won last year's Federal Election. If the Liberals follow this successful leadership change formula again current Deputy Liberal Leader Julie Bishop may find herself as the Liberal Prime Minister facing re-election in 2019."

This special telephone Morgan Poll was conducted over three nights last week, March 14-16, 2017, with an Australia-wide cross section of 534 electors. **Sample sizes of under 50 electors in SA & Tasmania and with voters for One Nation and Independents/Others should be treated with caution.*

Visit the Roy Morgan Online Store to browse our [Voter Profiles](#) by electorate, detailed [Voting Intention Demographics Reports](#) and [Most important Political Issue Reports](#) (all 150 electorates ranked by an issue).

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Better Prime Minister: Turnbull v Shorten

Electors were asked: "Thinking of Mr. Malcolm Turnbull and Mr. Bill Shorten. In your opinion, who would make the better Prime Minister – Mr. Turnbull or Mr. Shorten?"

	PM Tony Abbott v Bill Shorten			Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull v Bill Shorten					
	Jan 2015	Apr 2015	July 2015	Sep 15, 2015*	Oct 2015	May 2016	July 5, 2016**	Oct 2016	Mar 14-16, 2017
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Prime Minister Abbott/ Turnbull	41	44	42	70	76	57	51	47	49
Shorten	43	39	41	24	14	24	47	32	32
Abbott/ Turnbull lead	(2)	5	1	46	62	33	4	15	17
Neither / Can't say	16	17	17	6	10	19	2	21	19
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

*The first special Snap SMS Morgan Poll was conducted on Tuesday September 15, 2015 – the day Malcolm Turnbull was sworn in as Australia's 29th Prime Minister replacing former Prime Minister Tony Abbott.

**The second special Snap SMS Morgan Poll was conducted immediately after the close 2016 Federal Election.

Electors 18+ Analysis by Federal Voting Intention

	Mar 14-16, 2017	Analysis by Federal Voting Intention					
		L-NP	ALP	Greens	One Nation#	Ind/ Others#	Can't say#
	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Turnbull	49	92	20	16	42	58	43
Shorten	32	2	65	60	23	12	20
Turnbull lead	17	90	(45)	(44)	19	46	23
Neither/ Can't say	19	6	15	24	35	30	37
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

#Sample sizes less than 50 should be treated with caution.

Electors 18+ Analysis by Sex & Age

	Mar 14-16, 2017	Analysis by Sex & Age						
		Men	Women	18-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65+
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Turnbull	49	49	49	52	42	50	45	57
Shorten	32	34	30	34	34	29	36	28
Turnbull lead	17	15	19	18	8	21	9	29
Neither/ Can't say	19	17	21	14	24	21	19	15
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

#Sample sizes less than 50 should be treated with caution.

Electors 18+ Analysis by Regions & States

	Mar 14-16, 2017	Analysis by Regions & States							
		Country	Capital Cities	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA#	TAS#
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Turnbull	49	50	48	51	42	60	47	52	23
Shorten	32	35	30	27	42	22	32	29	63
Turnbull lead	17	15	18	24	-	38	15	23	(40)
Neither/ Can't say	19	15	22	22	16	18	21	19	14
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

#Sample sizes less than 50 should be treated with caution.

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Approval of Leaders – Malcolm Turnbull v Bill Shorten

Prime Minister: Malcolm Turnbull

Electors were asked: “Do you APPROVE or DISAPPROVE of the way Mr. Turnbull is handling his job as Prime Minister?”

	Prime Minister Tony Abbott				Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull			
	Sep 30-Oct 2,	Jan 12-13,	Apr 21-23,	July 20-22,	Oct 20-22,	May 4-5,	Oct 24-26,	Mar 14-16,
	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Approve	44	37	37	34	66	43	31	30
Disapprove	47	52	53	59	16	41	53	54
Approve - Disapprove	(3)	(15)	(16)	(25)	50	2	(22)	(24)
Can't say	9	11	10	7	18	16	16	16
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Electors 18+	Analysis by Federal Voting Intention						
	Mar 14-16, <u>2017</u>	L-NP	ALP	Greens	One Nation#	Ind/ Others#	Can't say#
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Approve	30	56	19	14	11	29	21
Disapprove	54	33	68	70	83	59	47
Approve - Disapprove	(24)	23	(49)	(56)	(72)	(30)	(26)
Can't say	16	11	13	16	6	12	32
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

#Sample sizes less than 50 should be treated with caution.

Electors 18+	Analysis by Sex & Age							
	Mar 14-16, <u>2017</u>	Men	Women	18-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65+
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Approve	30	31	30	41	33	31	22	33
Disapprove	54	56	53	30	46	55	64	59
Approve - Disapprove	(24)	(25)	(23)	11	(13)	(24)	(42)	(26)
Can't say	16	13	17	29	21	14	14	8
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

#Sample sizes less than 50 should be treated with caution.

Electors 18+	Analysis by Regions & States								
	Mar 14-16, <u>2017</u>	Country	Capital Cities	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA#	TAS#
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Approve	30	32	29	27	26	31	40	31	35
Disapprove	54	52	56	60	59	53	41	53	51
Approve - Disapprove	(24)	(20)	(27)	(33)	(33)	(22)	(1)	(22)	(16)
Can't say	16	16	15	13	15	16	19	16	14
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

#Sample sizes less than 50 should be treated with caution.

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Opposition Leader: Bill Shorten

Electors were asked: "Do you APPROVE or DISAPPROVE of the way Mr. Shorten is handling his job as Leader of the Opposition?"

Bill Shorten as Opposition Leader

	Sep 30-Oct 2, 2014	Jan 12-13, 2015	Apr 21-23, 2015	July 20-22, 2015	Oct 20-22, 2015	May 4-5, 2016	Oct 24-26, 2016	Mar 14-16, 2017
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Approve	37	37	34	24	25	34	31	28
Disapprove	42	40	48	60	62	49	49	56
Approve - Disapprove	(5)	(3)	(14)	(36)	(37)	(15)	(18)	(28)
Can't say	21	23	18	16	13	17	20	16
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Electors 18+ Analysis by Federal Voting Intention

	Mar 14-16, 2017	L-NP	ALP	Greens	One Nation#	Ind/ Others#	Can't say#
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Approve	28	18	51	29	11	35	10
Disapprove	56	75	34	51	81	57	57
Approve - Disapprove	(28)	(57)	(17)	(22)	(70)	(22)	(47)
Can't say	16	7	15	20	8	8	33
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

#Sample sizes less than 50 should be treated with caution.

Electors 18+ Analysis by Sex & Age

	Mar 14-16, 2017	Men	Women	18-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65+
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Approve	28	30	27	34	30	29	27	26
Disapprove	56	57	56	39	48	57	63	63
Approve - Disapprove	(28)	(27)	(29)	(5)	(18)	(28)	(36)	(37)
Can't say	16	13	17	27	22	14	10	11
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

#Sample sizes less than 50 should be treated with caution.

Electors 18+ Analysis by Regions & States

	Mar 14-16, 2017	Country	Capital Cities	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA#	TAS#
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Approve	28	26	29	24	33	21	40	21	38
Disapprove	56	63	53	64	54	64	36	60	31
Approve - Disapprove	(28)	(37)	(24)	(40)	(21)	(43)	4	(39)	(7)
Can't say	16	11	18	12	13	15	24	19	31
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

#Sample sizes less than 50 should be treated with caution.

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Margin of Error

The margin of error to be allowed for in any estimate depends mainly on the number of interviews on which it is based. The following table gives indications of the likely range within which estimates would be 95% likely to fall, expressed as the number of percentage points above or below the actual estimate. The figures are approximate and for general guidance only, and assume a simple random sample. Allowance for design effects (such as stratification and weighting) should be made as appropriate.

Sample Size	Percentage Estimate			
	40%-60%	25% or 75%	10% or 90%	5% or 95%
500	±4.3	±3.8	±2.6	±1.9
1,000	±3.2	±2.7	±1.9	±1.4

Morgan Poll Accuracy — Recent Elections State & Federal (2006 – 2016)

The Morgan Poll has proven to be consistently the most accurate regular poll in recent Australian Elections — including the 2013 Federal Election, 2010 Federal Election, 2007 Federal Election, 2010 Victorian State Election & 2012 Queensland State Election.

The **Morgan Poll** was the most accurate of all polling companies at [the 2013 Federal Election](#) for the two-party preferred vote (L-NP: 53.5% cf. ALP 46.5%) (sample 4,937 electors).

The **Morgan Poll** was the most accurate of all polling companies at [the 2007 Federal Election](#) for both primary vote and two-party preferred predictions (sample 2,115 electors).

The **Morgan Poll** accurately predicted [that the ALP would win the 2006 Queensland Election with a reduced majority](#) (sample 604 electors).

The **Morgan Poll** accurately predicted [that the ALP would win the 2006 Victorian Election with a reduced majority](#) (sample 956 electors). The **Morgan Poll** was also the most accurate on the primary vote of the major parties for the Victorian election.

Note: The [discussion on Possum Pollytics](#) regarding Morgan and Newspoll is well worth reading.

The following included comment says it all: “I find it interesting that for the only poll in the last five years for which there is any ‘real’ figure with which to compare, i.e. the polls immediately before the 2004 election, Morgan (45.5%) was closer to the actual Coalition Primary (46.7%) than Newspoll (45%) or Nielsen (49%), and Morgan (38.5%) was also closer to the ALP actual primary (37.6%) than Newspoll (39%), and only marginally further away than Nielsen (37%). Since we have no idea of how far away the ongoing polls are from ‘reality’ (whatever that means), surely we should just go with what we know, that in the most recent testable case, Morgan was better at forecasting the actual primary vote than Newspoll. On what possible basis should we decide that the Newspoll or Nielsen primary vote estimate is ‘better’ than Morgan’s.”

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