

## **Budget has woken the voters from their torpor**

Simon Benson, National Political Editor, 1:00AM April 8, 2019

This is the bounce that Scott Morrison has been praying for. The Prime Minister now starts the race in with a chance rather than completely euchred. The latest Newspoll numbers will confirm for Morrison that his political strategy is right and the policy settings are starting to pay dividends.

It also shows that the budget may have been enough to awaken the voting public from a three-year political torpor.

These numbers will have an important psychological effect for Liberal MPs and the party and will be of concern for Bill Shorten. Labor's primary vote has fallen two points to 37 per cent, down from a high of 42 per cent last September.

This comes hot on the heels of a surprisingly poor primary vote of 33 per cent for Labor in the NSW election last month.

**FEDERAL BUDGET**

	MAY																			APR	
	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
EXTREMELY GOOD	6	2	4	3	4	4	6	6	9	3	3	5	3	3	3	9	5	7	7	8	15
QUITE GOOD	40	33	35	33	39	46	44	45	51	46	42	39	34	34	32	30	41	27	29	33	29
<b>TOTAL GOOD</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>44</b>
QUITE BAD	15	22	21	22	17	17	19	17	10	18	23	21	23	26	24	25	21	19	19	18	12
EXTREMELY BAD	5	9	6	12	4	5	7	3	2	5	10	10	9	11	13	23	7	10	8	8	6
<b>TOTAL BAD</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>18</b>
UNCOMMITTED	34	34	34	30	36	28	24	29	28	28	22	25	31	26	28	13	26	37	37	33	38

Question: Thinking of the federal budget handed down by Treasurer Josh Frydenberg recently, Overall do you believe the budget will be good or bad for the Australian economy?

APRIL 2019	Political support			Gender		Age		
	Total	Coalition	Labor	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50+
EXTREMELY GOOD	15	29	5	17	14	15	12	17
QUITE GOOD	29	46	18	31	27	30	27	29
<b>TOTAL GOOD</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>46</b>
QUITE BAD	12	2	19	11	12	12	13	12
EXTREMELY BAD	6	1	9	5	7	6	5	6
<b>TOTAL BAD</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>
UNCOMMITTED	38	22	49	36	40	37	43	36

**BETTER/ WORSE OFF FINANCIALLY**

	MAY																			APR	
	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
LOT BETTER OFF	2	2	2	1	0	3	5	4	4	2	2	2	1	2	1	1	3	3	5	4	9
LITTLE BETTER OFF	13	15	15	6	15	26	29	31	32	27	20	17	10	16	10	4	17	15	14	25	25
<b>TOTAL BETTER OFF</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>34</b>
LITTLE WORSE OFF	20	25	17	31	22	14	14	15	9	21	24	20	26	24	30	43	23	26	33	18	13
LOT WORSE OFF	9	18	12	13	10	8	7	9	5	11	9	10	15	17	14	26	7	13	12	9	6
<b>TOTAL WORSE OFF</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>19</b>
UNCOMMITTED	56	40	54	49	53	49	45	41	50	39	45	51	48	41	45	26	50	43	36	44	47

Question: How do you think the budget will affect your own financial position in the next 12 months? Do you believe you personally will be better or worse off?

APRIL 2019	Political support			Gender		Age		
	Total	Coalition	Labor	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50+
LOT BETTER OFF	9	15	4	10	8	11	8	8
LITTLE BETTER OFF	25	38	19	29	22	28	28	22
<b>TOTAL BETTER OFF</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>30</b>
LITTLE WORSE OFF	13	4	20	13	13	12	11	14
LOT WORSE OFF	6	1	10	6	7	6	7	7
<b>TOTAL WORSE OFF</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>21</b>
UNCOMMITTED	47	42	47	42	50	43	46	49

**OPPOSITION DELIVER A BETTER BUDGET**

	MAY																			APR	
	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
YES	26	28	28	29	27	29	31	26	31	29	33	36	38	37	41	39	36	34	33	37	37
NO	50	49	51	46	51	46	49	51	44	52	51	46	41	42	41	46	51	46	47	44	45
UNCOMMITTED	24	23	21	25	22	25	20	23	25	19	16	18	21	21	18	15	13	20	20	19	18

Question: Do you believe the Labor Party would have delivered a better budget for Australia's current economic conditions?

APRIL 2019	Political support			Gender		Age		
	Total	Coalition	Labor	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50+
YES	37	10	71	42	33	44	41	30
NO	45	80	12	46	44	35	39	56
UNCOMMITTED	18	10	17	12	23	21	20	14

**GOVERNMENT PRIORITY**

	Political support			Gender		Age		
	Total	Coalition	Labor	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50+
INCREASED FUNDING OF SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE	38	31	48	39	36	35	35	41
CUTS TO PERSONAL INCOME TAX	20	18	23	16	25	26	30	11
PAYING DOWN GOVERNMENT DEBT	20	25	14	25	15	17	16	24
BUDGET SURPLUS	10	17	4	13	7	10	8	11
UNCOMMITTED	12	9	11	7	17	12	11	13

Question: In your opinion, what should the government prioritise?

Labor hardheads in NSW believe this is something Shorten needs to address.

On the Coalition side, had Newspoll remained at 46 per cent to 54 per cent — where it was a month ago — Morrison and co may as well have not turned up at the gates.

At 48 per cent to 52 per cent, the Coalition is still down 10 seats on a uniform swing. But it is a lot better than the 20 seats it was looking at four weeks ago.

Morrison can be confident now that the campaign will matter, as it did in NSW where voters were largely undecided until the final days of the campaign.

He has taken a tactical decision to use the incumbency of government to wait another week before calling a May 18 election. Why would the Prime Minister give Shorten an equal footing for a week while he and Josh Frydenberg go about selling a budget that the polls also suggest has been the best-received for a decade.

There are hidden risks with waiting. A week of Senate estimates could throw a number of as-yet-unknown landmines.

But Morrison also believes that Shorten has given him a pre-election gift with a climate change policy that was snuck out on the eve of the budget to avoid maximum scrutiny.

Expect to hear a lot more about electric vehicles and tradies being thrown out of their utes over the coming week.

There are other considerations with election timing.

Getting the NSW logistics operations in place has taken time considering it has had to shift gears from the NSW campaign to a national one in the space of a few weeks.

The school holiday and Easter dates also have an impact on the cut-offs for the closing of rolls and nominations once the writs are issued.

With the polls tightening, Shorten's biggest problem may end up being that everyone expects Shorten to win.