

Polling - National Cabinet secrecy

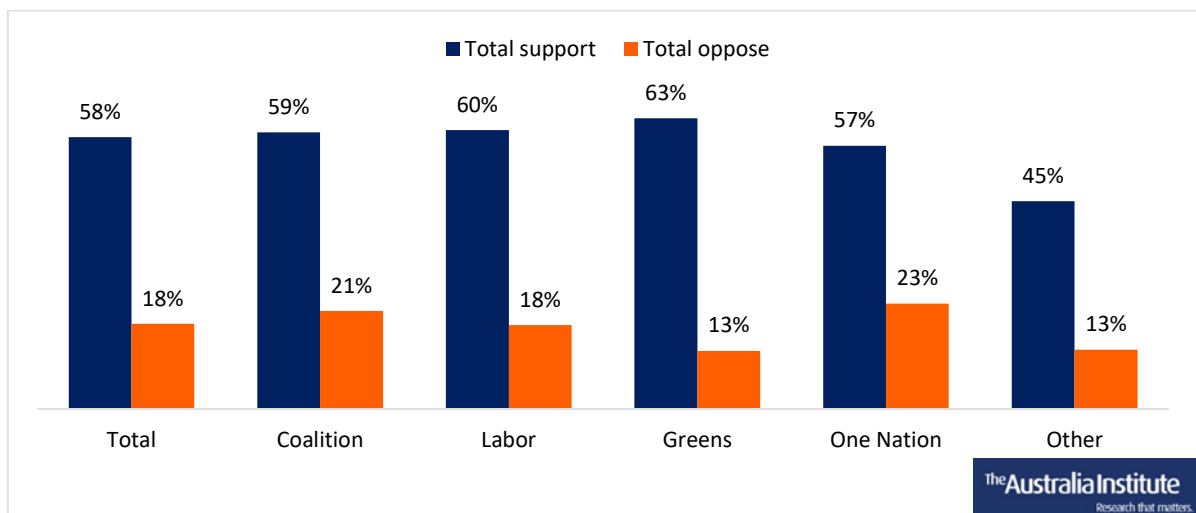
August 2021

Key results

In May 2021, The Australia Institute surveyed a nationally representative sample of 1,006 Australians about the confidentiality of National Cabinet documents and whether these documents should be accessible through Freedom of Information (FOI) requests. At the time of polling, the issue was the subject of a case in the Administrative Appeals Tribunal, brought by Senator Rex Patrick.¹

- Three in five Australians (58%) support allowing National Cabinet documents to be accessible via FOI requests, including 23% who strongly support.
- One in five Australians (18%) oppose allowing National Cabinet documents to be accessible through FOI requests, with 5% strongly opposed.
- A majority of Coalition (59%), Labor (60%), Greens (63%) and One Nation (57%) voters support making National Cabinet documents accessible via FOI requests.

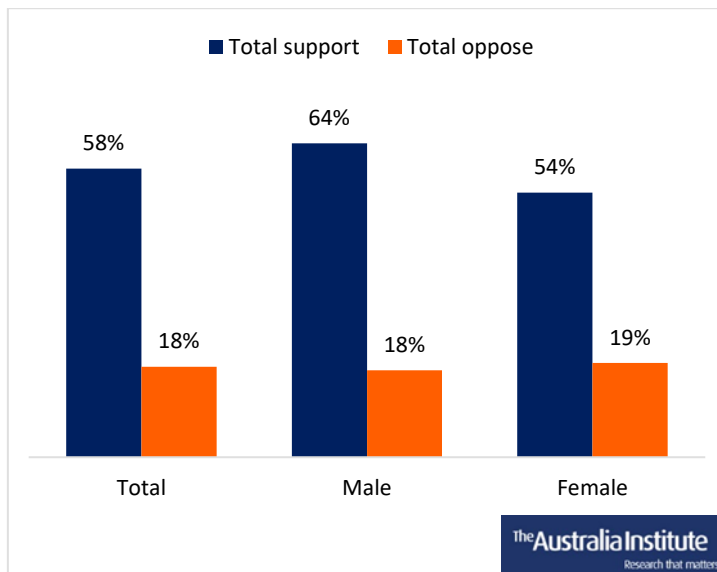
Figure 1: National Cabinet documents to be accessible by FOI, by voting intention



¹ Karp (2021) *Battle to unlock secret of Scott Morrison’s national cabinet faces tribunal*, <http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2021/may/19/morrison-bus-analogy-shows-national-cabinet-meetings-are-not-confidential-tribunal-hears>

- Among Independent/Other voters, 45% support National Cabinet documents being accessible via FOI request. 13% oppose.
- Men are somewhat more likely to support National Cabinet documents being accessible via FOI request than women (64% vs 54%), although they are about as likely to oppose (18% vs 19%).
- Levels of support and opposition are similar across age groups (57–63% support)

Figure 2: Support for National Cabinet documents to be accessible by FOI, by gender



Method

The Australia Institute surveyed 1,006 people on 19 to 21 May 2021, online through Dynata’s Rapid Results polling, with nationally representative samples by gender, age and region.

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

Results are shown only for larger states.

Voting crosstabs show voting intentions for the House of Representatives. Those who were undecided were asked which way they were leaning; these leanings are included in voting intention crosstabs. “Coalition” includes separate responses for Liberal and National. “Other” refers to Independent/Other.

Detailed results

The National Cabinet is the meeting of the Prime Minister and the premiers and chief ministers of all states and territories. Currently all National Cabinet documents are considered to be confidential and are not released publicly.

Would you support or oppose allowing these documents to be accessible via freedom of information requests, subject to the usual exceptions like national security?

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>VIC</i>	<i>QLD</i>	<i>WA</i>
Strongly support	23%	26%	20%	24%	25%	22%	19%
Support	35%	37%	34%	36%	31%	40%	43%
Oppose	13%	13%	13%	13%	15%	12%	13%
Strongly oppose	5%	5%	6%	4%	5%	6%	4%
Don't know/Not sure	23%	19%	27%	23%	24%	20%	21%

	<i>Total</i>	<i>18-29</i>	<i>30-39</i>	<i>40-49</i>	<i>50-59</i>	<i>60+</i>
Strongly support	23%	21%	22%	26%	24%	21%
Support	35%	36%	35%	32%	34%	42%
Oppose	13%	16%	14%	12%	10%	14%
Strongly oppose	5%	6%	3%	7%	6%	5%
Don't know/Not sure	23%	21%	26%	24%	26%	18%

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Coalition</i>	<i>Labor</i>	<i>Greens</i>	<i>One Nation</i>	<i>Other</i>
Strongly support	23%	19%	23%	30%	21%	28%
Support	35%	40%	37%	32%	36%	17%
Oppose	13%	14%	14%	7%	19%	10%
Strongly oppose	5%	7%	4%	5%	4%	3%
Don't know/Not sure	23%	19%	22%	25%	21%	43%