

Opinion poll shows 64% of voters support budget cut to aid

By Ashlee Betteridge
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Results released last week from an Essential Media opinion poll [have shown](#) that 64% of voters support the [government's cuts to aid](#) in the Federal Budget.

Of the 20 budget measures in the poll, the cuts to foreign aid were the most popular, with 64% of respondents supporting the decision and only 13% opposing (the other 23% of respondents being either clueless or impartial).

The poll also asked a question on the decision to scrap the 0.5% of GNI target, which was a less popular move, with only 44% of respondents supporting the decision and 20% opposing.

	<i>Total Support</i>	<i>Total Oppose</i>	<i>Strongly support</i>	<i>Support</i>	<i>Neither support nor oppose</i>	<i>Oppose</i>	<i>Strongly oppose</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Foreign aid frozen at current levels for two years, helping save \$7.6 billion over five years	64%	13%	28%	36%	18%	6%	7%	5%
International commitment to spend 0.5 per cent of gross national income on foreign aid abandoned	44%	20%	15%	29%	27%	10%	10%	8%

It is important to note the wording here on the first question—the “\$7.6 billion saving” line

involves a significant dose of spin, as those familiar with the aid budget would know. One has to wonder how responses might change if the question were worded differently. But it does test the tactic that the Coalition has used to sell the aid cut, and that tactic has clearly worked. It's also interesting that the 0.5% of GNI target seems to attract more public sympathy (and more ambivalence). Perhaps this is further evidence that most members of the public don't actually know how much (or how little) aid we give as a percentage of GNI, a problem that has previously been [illustrated by this video](#) from World Vision.

The poll also broke down the responses to these questions by party. This does offer up one surprise: according to this poll at least, a very similar percentage of Greens and Labor voters supported the decision to cut aid (51% and 52% respectively). These results differ from the responses to the more open-ended question on foreign aid in the [ABC Vote Compass poll](#) conducted last year before the election, which showed higher support for foreign aid among voters intending to support the Greens compared to those intending to support Labor.

	Vote Labor		Vote Lib/Nat		Vote Green			
	<i>Total Support</i>	<i>Total Oppose</i>	<i>Total Support</i>	<i>Total Oppose</i>	<i>Total Support</i>	<i>Total Oppose</i>		
Foreign aid frozen at current levels for two years, helping save \$7.6 billion over five years	52%	22%	83%	3%	51%	33%		
International commitment to spend 0.5 per cent of gross national income on foreign aid abandoned	32%	29%	64%	8%	23%	49%		

The Essential Media survey was conducted online from May 14-19 and is based on 1030 respondents.

About the author/s

Ashlee Betteridge

Ashlee Betteridge was the Manager of the Development Policy Centre until April 2021. She was previously a Research Officer at the centre from 2013-2017. A former journalist, she holds a Master of Public Policy (Development Policy) from ANU and has development experience in Indonesia and Timor-Leste. She now has her own consultancy, Better Things Consulting, and works across several large projects with managing contractors.

Link: <https://devpolicy.org/opinion-poll-shows-64-of-voters-support-budget-cut-to-aid/>

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