

The Essential Report – National Secular Lobby

4 August 2021



The Essential Report

Date: 04/08/2021

Prepared By: Essential Research

Data Supplied by:



Our researchers are members of the Research Society.



About this poll

This report summarises the results for a set of questions commissioned by the National Secular Lobby (NSL) in a fortnightly omnibus conducted by Essential Research with data provided by Qualtrics. Data was collected online over two waves (surveys) of the Essential Report poll.

The first survey was conducted from 14th July to 18th July 2021 and is based on n=1,100 respondents in total. Q1 and Q2 were randomly shown to approximately half the sample each (n=548 answered Q1, and n=552 answered Q2).

The second survey was conducted from 28th July to 1st August 2021 and is based on n=1,098 respondents in total. Again, Q1 and Q2 were randomly shown to half the sample each (n=542 answered Q1, and n=556 answered Q2).

The results from the first and second survey were then combined. In total, n=1,090 answered Q1, and n=1,108 answered Q2. This report summarises the combined results of the data collected from each wave for each question.

The weighting efficiency applied to the results at a national level is 95% for the combined Q1, and 94% for the combined Q2. This gives an effective sample size of n=1,030 for Q1, and n=1,040 for Q2. The margin of error at this effective sample size is $\pm 3.1\%$ (95% confidence level).

The full methodology used to carry out this research is described in the appendix at the end of the report.

Note that due to rounding, not all tables necessarily total 100% and subtotals may also vary.

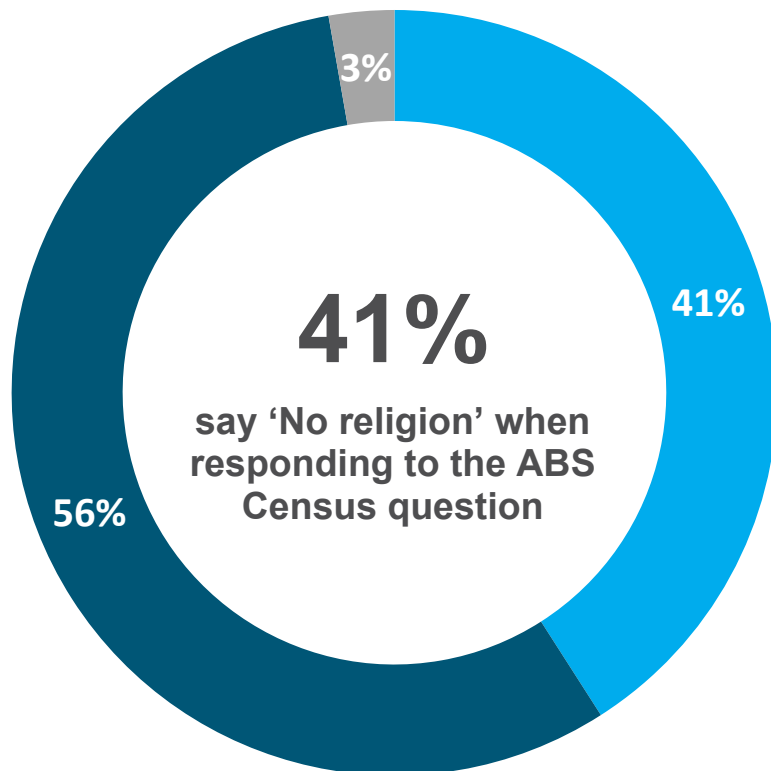
Key Insights

- 1. When asked about their religion, people are more likely to say they have a religion when asked a question replicating the current ABS Census question compared to the alternative two-part question**
 - When the current ABS Census question on religion ('What is your religion?') is asked, over half (56%) of respondents select a listed religion or enter a response in the 'Other (please specify)' field, while 41% select 'No religion'. 3% say they prefer not to answer.
 - When the alternative two-part question on religion ('Do you currently have a religion?', followed by 'What is your religion?' asked only to those who answer 'Yes' to the first part) is asked, 44% say they currently have a religion, while over half (52%) say they don't currently have one. 4% say they prefer not to answer.
- 2. There is an age difference in how people respond to the two questions – while in both instances, those aged over 55 are more likely to say they have a religion compared to younger cohorts**
 - Those aged over 55 are more likely to say they have a religion when asked the current Census question, compared to when they are asked the alternative question. When asked the current Census question, 66% of those aged over 55 say they have a religion, compared to 55% of those aged 35-54, and 46% of those aged 18-34.
 - However, when asked the alternative question, 49% of those aged over 55 and 45% of those aged 35-54 say they have a religion, compared to 36% of those aged 18-34.
- 3. Education and voting intention can influence people's declaration of having a religion**
 - While there is no difference among those with different education levels in their response to the current Census question, when asked the alternative version of the question, respondents with a university education are more likely to say they currently have a religion compared to others (52% to 39% of those with professional qualifications, and 41% of those with secondary school education).
 - Coalition voters are the most likely voters to say they have a religion when responding to either version of the question (67% current version, 53% alternative version), followed by Labor voters (54% current, 40% alternative), and minor/independent party voters (55%, 44%). Greens voters are the least likely voters to say they have a religion in both instances (39% current, 32% alternative).

ABS Census question on religion: Current vs alternative version

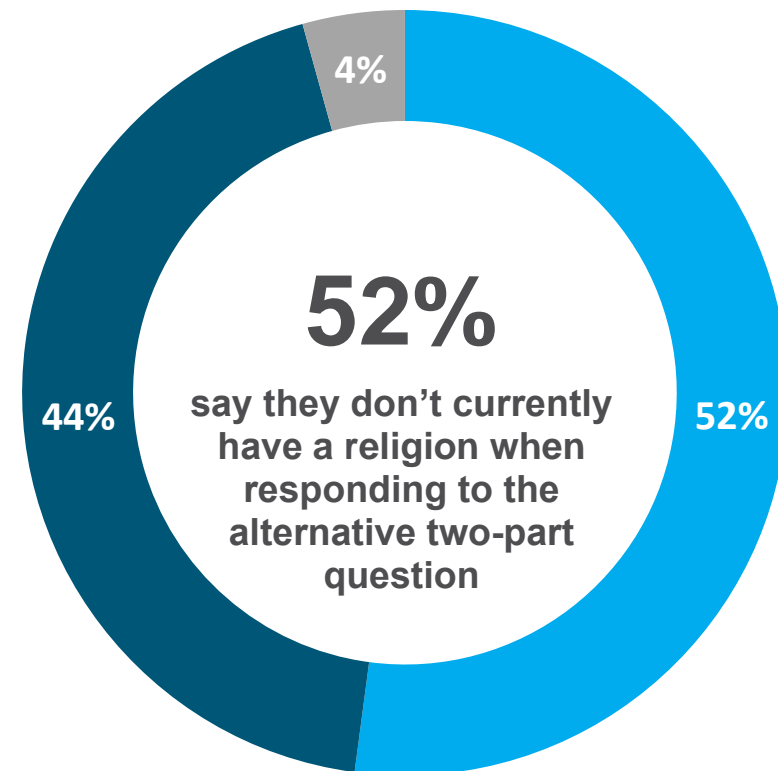
Q What is your religion?

■ No religion ■ TOTAL: Religion ■ Prefer not to answer



Q Do you currently have a religion?

■ No ■ Yes ■ Prefer not to answer



ABS Census question on religion: Current vs alternative version (Combined results)

Q What is your religion?

Q Do you currently have a religion? Q What is your religion? [ASKED ONLY IF: DO YOU CURRENTLY HAVE A RELIGION?=YES]

Answer options	Current question	Alternative question		
	What is your religion?	Part 1 Do you currently have a religion?	Part 2 What is your religion?	Part 2 Revised* What is your religion?
What is your religion?=No religion / Do you currently have a religion?=No	41%	52%	-	-
What is your religion?=TOTAL: Religion / Do you currently have a religion?=Yes	56%	44%	-	-
Catholic	22%	-	37%	16%
Anglican (Church of England)	13%	-	19%	8%
Uniting Church	3%	-	8%	3%
Islam	3%	-	5%	2%
Buddhism	2%	-	4%	2%
Presbyterian	2%	-	4%	2%
Hinduism	2%	-	4%	2%
Greek Orthodox	2%	-	3%	1%
Baptist	2%	-	3%	1%
Other (please specify)	6%	-	12%	5%
Prefer not to answer	3%	4%	2%	1%
Base (n)	1,090	1,108	486	1,108

*The proportion nominating each religion as a percentage of all respondents who answered the question 'Do you currently have a religion?'



ABS Census question on religion: Current vs alternative version (Jul 14–18 results)

Q What is your religion?

Q Do you currently have a religion? Q What is your religion? [ASKED ONLY IF: DO YOU CURRENTLY HAVE A RELIGION?=YES]

Answer options	Current question	Alternative question		
	What is your religion?	Part 1 Do you currently have a religion?	Part 2 What is your religion?	Part 2 Revised* What is your religion?
What is your religion?=No religion / Do you currently have a religion?=No	36%	51%	-	-
What is your religion?=TOTAL: Religion / Do you currently have a religion?=Yes	60%	43%	-	-
Catholic	24%	-	38%	17%
Anglican (Church of England)	13%	-	19%	8%
Uniting Church	4%	-	3%	1%
Islam	4%	-	7%	3%
Buddhism	2%	-	5%	2%
Presbyterian	2%	-	5%	2%
Hinduism	2%	-	3%	1%
Greek Orthodox	1%	-	3%	1%
Baptist	2%	-	4%	2%
Other (please specify)	6%	-	12%	5%
Prefer not to answer	4%	6%	1%	1%
Base (n)	548	552	242	552

*The proportion nominating each religion as a percentage of all respondents who answered the question 'Do you currently have a religion?'



ABS Census question on religion: Current vs alternative version (Jul 28–Aug 1 results)

Q What is your religion?

Q Do you currently have a religion? Q What is your religion? [ASKED ONLY IF: DO YOU CURRENTLY HAVE A RELIGION?=YES]

Answer options	Current question	Alternative question		
	What is your religion?	Part 1 Do you currently have a religion?	Part 2 What is your religion?	Part 2 Revised* What is your religion?
What is your religion?=No religion / Do you currently have a religion?=No	46%	54%	-	-
What is your religion?=TOTAL: Religion / Do you currently have a religion?=Yes	52%	44%	-	-
Catholic	20%	-	35%	15%
Anglican (Church of England)	13%	-	19%	9%
Uniting Church	3%	-	12%	5%
Islam	2%	-	4%	2%
Buddhism	2%	-	3%	1%
Presbyterian	2%	-	3%	1%
Hinduism	2%	-	4%	2%
Greek Orthodox	2%	-	3%	1%
Baptist	1%	-	2%	1%
Other (please specify)	6%	-	11%	5%
Prefer not to answer	2%	3%	4%	2%
Base (n)	542	556	244	556

*The proportion nominating each religion as a percentage of all respondents who answered the question 'Do you currently have a religion?'



Current ABS Census question on religion (Combined results)

Q What is your religion?

	Total	Gender		Age			Education		
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Secondary Education	Professional Qualifications	University Education
Catholic	22%	22%	22%	18%	23%	25%	22%	23%	22%
Anglican (Church of England)	13%	13%	13%	7%	10%	21%	12%	15%	11%
Uniting Church	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	5%	3%	3%	3%
Islam	3%	4%	2%	5%	4%	1%	1%	2%	5%
Buddhism	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%	1%	1%	1%	4%
Presbyterian	2%	2%	2%	1%	2%	3%	1%	2%	2%
Hinduism	2%	3%	2%	4%	2%	1%	1%	1%	5%
Greek Orthodox	2%	1%	2%	1%	2%	2%	2%	1%	2%
Baptist	2%	1%	2%	2%	0%	3%	2%	2%	2%
Other (please specify)	6%	6%	6%	5%	7%	7%	6%	7%	5%
No religion	41%	41%	41%	49%	42%	33%	45%	42%	38%
TOTAL: Religion	56%	56%	56%	46%	55%	66%	52%	56%	61%
Prefer not to answer	3%	3%	3%	4%	3%	1%	3%	2%	2%
Base (n)	1,090	566	524	340	362	388	251	440	378



	State					Location		Employment Status		
	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	Capital City	Non-Capital City	In paid employment	Not in paid employment	Retired
Catholic	29%	20%	17%	24%	20%	25%	17%	23%	21%	23%
Anglican (Church of England)	14%	12%	13%	14%	12%	11%	16%	11%	10%	22%
Uniting Church	3%	3%	4%	2%	2%	2%	5%	3%	2%	5%
Islam	5%	2%	2%	1%	4%	3%	2%	4%	3%	1%
Buddhism	3%	2%	2%	0%	2%	2%	2%	3%	2%	1%
Presbyterian	1%	3%	1%	0%	1%	2%	2%	2%	1%	3%
Hinduism	2%	2%	1%	1%	0%	3%	1%	3%	2%	1%
Greek Orthodox	1%	3%	0%	4%	0%	2%	1%	2%	1%	2%
Baptist	2%	3%	1%	2%	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	5%
Other (please specify)	6%	6%	7%	6%	4%	5%	8%	6%	6%	7%
No religion	33%	40%	47%	43%	50%	41%	42%	42%	48%	30%
TOTAL: Religion	65%	57%	48%	55%	46%	57%	54%	55%	50%	68%
Prefer not to answer	1%	3%	4%	2%	5%	2%	4%	3%	2%	1%
Base (n)	328	307	220	90	94	743	347	611	216	230



	Federal Voting Intention				Household Income*			Household Composition	
	Labor	Liberal + National	Greens	TOTAL: Other	TOTAL: Lower Income	TOTAL: Mid Income	TOTAL: High Income	Dependent Children	No Dependent Children
Catholic	21%	27%	18%	17%	17%	22%	27%	26%	20%
Anglican (Church of England)	12%	18%	6%	12%	15%	13%	12%	10%	14%
Uniting Church	4%	3%	0%	5%	4%	3%	3%	2%	4%
Islam	4%	2%	3%	5%	4%	3%	2%	4%	3%
Buddhism	1%	2%	4%	2%	2%	2%	3%	2%	2%
Presbyterian	1%	3%	0%	1%	2%	2%	2%	1%	2%
Hinduism	2%	3%	3%	0%	1%	2%	3%	3%	2%
Greek Orthodox	2%	2%	0%	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%	1%
Baptist	1%	3%	0%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	2%
Other (please specify)	5%	5%	5%	10%	8%	7%	4%	6%	6%
No religion	44%	31%	60%	43%	42%	41%	40%	40%	41%
TOTAL: Religion	54%	67%	39%	55%	56%	58%	58%	56%	56%
Prefer not to answer	2%	1%	2%	2%	2%	1%	2%	3%	2%
Base (n)	347	427	92	114	343	315	336	405	685



Alternative ABS Census question on religion – Part 1 (Combined results)

Q Do you currently have a religion?

	Total	Gender		Age			Education		
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Secondary Education	Professional Qualifications	University Education
No	52%	51%	53%	58%	52%	47%	55%	58%	44%
Yes	44%	44%	43%	36%	45%	49%	41%	39%	52%
Prefer not to answer	4%	4%	4%	6%	3%	4%	4%	3%	4%
Base (n)	1,108	510	598	342	383	383	292	412	386

	NSW	VIC	State			Location		Employment Status		
			QLD	SA	WA	Capital City	Non-Capital City	In paid employment	Not in paid employment	Retired
No	44%	51%	62%	63%	54%	51%	55%	54%	54%	47%
Yes	54%	44%	36%	34%	39%	45%	41%	44%	39%	50%
Prefer not to answer	2%	6%	3%	4%	7%	4%	4%	3%	7%	3%
Base (n)	378	246	217	85	125	745	363	607	241	225

	Federal Voting Intention				Household Income*			Household Composition	
	Labor	Liberal + National	Greens	TOTAL: Other	TOTAL: Lower Income	TOTAL: Mid Income	TOTAL: High Income	Dependent Children	No Dependent Children
No	56%	44%	63%	51%	50%	57%	53%	53%	52%
Yes	40%	53%	32%	44%	46%	40%	45%	44%	43%
Prefer not to answer	4%	3%	5%	5%	4%	3%	2%	3%	5%
Base (n)	399	389	98	131	379	299	327	421	687



Alternative ABS Census question on religion – Part 2 (Combined results)

Q What is your religion?

[ASKED ONLY IF: DO YOU CURRENTLY HAVE A RELIGION?=YES]

	Total	Gender		Age			Education		
		Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Secondary Education	Professional Qualifications	University Education
Catholic	37%	33%	40%	33%	41%	34%	45%	36%	32%
Anglican (Church of England)	19%	19%	20%	11%	16%	28%	21%	20%	18%
Uniting Church	8%	9%	6%	2%	8%	11%	7%	12%	5%
Islam	5%	8%	3%	12%	6%	0%	4%	5%	7%
Buddhism	4%	5%	3%	7%	6%	0%	1%	4%	5%
Presbyterian	4%	5%	3%	4%	2%	5%	3%	4%	5%
Hinduism	4%	4%	3%	8%	2%	2%	0%	0%	9%
Greek Orthodox	3%	2%	3%	4%	3%	2%	2%	2%	4%
Baptist	3%	2%	4%	2%	4%	2%	2%	4%	2%
Other (please specify)	12%	11%	12%	13%	10%	12%	12%	12%	11%
Prefer not to answer	2%	3%	2%	5%	1%	2%	2%	3%	2%
Base (n)	486	231	255	126	174	186	119	164	198



	State					Location		Employment Status		
	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	Capital City	Non-Capital City	In paid employment	Not in paid employment	Retired
Catholic	36%	42%	28%	32%	39%	38%	34%	41%	35%	27%
Anglican (Church of England)	23%	11%	27%	14%	22%	19%	21%	17%	13%	32%
Uniting Church	6%	6%	12%	20%	2%	4%	15%	6%	6%	13%
Islam	7%	7%	1%	6%	3%	5%	5%	7%	8%	0%
Buddhism	2%	6%	3%	5%	7%	4%	2%	6%	2%	0%
Presbyterian	3%	4%	7%	4%	3%	4%	3%	3%	3%	8%
Hinduism	5%	1%	1%	0%	3%	5%	0%	4%	3%	3%
Greek Orthodox	1%	5%	3%	5%	2%	4%	1%	3%	4%	1%
Baptist	3%	0%	3%	5%	4%	3%	2%	2%	6%	3%
Other (please specify)	11%	15%	13%	10%	8%	11%	14%	10%	16%	12%
Prefer not to answer	2%	2%	2%	0%	7%	2%	3%	1%	4%	2%
Base (n)	204	106	79	30	48	335	151	266	95	114



	Federal Voting Intention			Household Income*			Household Composition		
	Labor	Liberal + National	Greens	TOTAL: Other	TOTAL: Lower Income	TOTAL: Mid Income	TOTAL: High Income	Dependent Children	No Dependent Children
Catholic	45%	34%		22%	37%	38%	36%	40%	35%
Anglican (Church of England)	14%	24%		29%	21%	21%	17%	13%	24%
Uniting Church	6%	10%		15%	10%	11%	5%	7%	8%
Islam	6%	6%		0%	3%	6%	8%	8%	4%
Buddhism	5%	3%		2%	2%	3%	8%	5%	3%
Presbyterian	5%	4%		0%	6%	4%	3%	3%	5%
Hinduism	6%	2%		0%	1%	4%	6%	5%	3%
Greek Orthodox	2%	1%		6%	2%	2%	4%	4%	2%
Baptist	1%	3%		5%	4%	1%	2%	4%	2%
Other (please specify)	7%	12%		22%	13%	8%	10%	11%	12%
Prefer not to answer	3%	1%		0%	2%	1%	2%	2%	3%
Base (n)	158	208		60	173	121	149	189	297

NB: Greens results have been removed from this table due to low base size (< n=30)



Appendix: Household income definitions*

TOTAL: Lower Income	Up to \$51,999 per year Total of all wages/salaries, government benefits, pensions, allowances and other income that your household usually receives (GROSS – before tax and superannuation deductions)
TOTAL: Mid Income	\$52,000 to \$103,999 per year Total of all wages/salaries, government benefits, pensions, allowances and other income that your household usually receives (GROSS – before tax and superannuation deductions)
TOTAL: High Income	More than \$104,000 per year Total of all wages/salaries, government benefits, pensions, allowances and other income that your household usually receives (GROSS – before tax and superannuation deductions)

Appendix: Methodology, margin of error and professional standards

The data gathered for this report is gathered from a fortnightly online omnibus run by Essential Research with sample provided by Qualtrics from online panels.

The online omnibus is active from the Wednesday night of each week and closed on the following Sunday. The target population is all Australian residents aged 18+. Participants were invited to participate and completed the survey online without an interviewer present and incentives were offered for participation.

The response rate varies each week, but usually delivers 1000+ interviews. Quotas are applied to be representative of the target population by age, gender and location.

RIM weighting is applied to the data using information sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC). The factors used in the weighting are age, gender, location and party ID.

Information for the weighting efficiency, effective sample size and margin of error for each poll (from June 2021) can be found here: <https://essentialvision.com.au/about-this-poll>

Each fortnight, the team at Essential Media Communications discusses issues that are topical and a series of questions are devised to put to the Australian public. Some questions are repeated regularly (such as political preference and leadership approval), while others are unique to each week and reflect current media and



social issues. Full text for standard voting and regular political preferences can be found in the link above. No questions were asked prior to these questions which have material influence on results.

Participants not eligible to vote in federal elections (either for age, residency or other reasons) are excluded from voting intention. Eligible participants are able to select 'Unsure' for voting intention. They were then asked a 'leaner' question which also included an 'Unsure' option. Participants answering 'Unsure' are NOT excluded from published results, or any subsequent questions. 2 party preferred (2PP) calculations use stated preference. Preference flows from previous federal and state elections are only used for participants answering 'Unsure' for stated preference.

All Essential Research staff hold Research Society membership and are bound by professional codes of behaviour. This research is compliant with the Australian Polling Council Quality Mark standards.

