

Tuesday, 20 April 2021

## Australians divided over PM Scott Morrison's handling of COVID-19 and all related issues

A slim majority of 51% of Australians disapprove of Prime Minister Scott Morrison's handling of COVID-19 and all related issues compared to 49% that approve.

### Approval of Prime Minister Scott Morrison's handling of COVID-19 and all related issues centres on Australia's excellent performance compared to other countries

For the 49% of Australians who approve of the way Prime Minister Scott Morrison is handling COVID-19 and all related issues the main reason is that Australia is in a better position than just about anywhere else in the world and this is a marker of the PM's good handling of COVID-19.

They also valued the Prime Minister sticking to the medical advice, being quick to keep the public informed about what is going on in a tough situation (such as the EU withholding vaccines), dealing with changing circumstances and taking a considered and proportionate response to the threat.

### Disapproval of Prime Minister Scott Morrison's handling of COVID-19 and all related issues focuses on the vaccine rollout as well as Morrison not being accountable for mistakes

The 51% of Australians that disapprove of Morrison's handling of COVID-19 and related issues have consistently brought up the 'bungled' vaccine rollout and also the perception Morrison is always 'passing the blame' to the states and others for anything that goes wrong and taking credit when it is the states that have done the greater part of the job dealing with COVID.

Morrison is seen as not taking responsibility for anything and not being accountable for mistakes made in the Government's handling of COVID-19 as well as not being honest about what has caused problems and being more interested in spinning a situation

A majority of younger Australians under 35 years of age, women, people in capital cities and Victoria as well as supporters of the ALP and the Greens **disapprove** of Morrison's handling of the pandemic.

However, there is **majority support** for Prime Minister Scott Morrison's handling of all COVID-19 related issues among Australians aged 65+, people in country areas, the States of NSW, Queensland, Western Australia and Tasmania, as well as L-NP supporters.

Australians surveyed last week were each asked about their willingness to be vaccinated and then their approval of the Prime Minister's handling of all COVID-19 related issues:

- **Question 1:** "Are you willing to be vaccinated for COVID-19 or not?" Respondents who said "No" were then asked: "If the Pfizer vaccine for COVID-19 became available would you be willing to be vaccinated?" 7% of Australians are already vaccinated, a further 69% said they are willing to be vaccinated and an additional 7% said they are willing to be vaccinated with the Pfizer vaccine – a total of 83%. TOTAL Yes 83% cf. No 17%. ([Click here for further details on Australians' views on vaccination](#))
- **Question 2:** "Thinking about Prime Minister Scott Morrison's handling of all COVID-19 related issues. Do you approve or disapprove?" Approve 49% cf. Disapprove 51%.
- **Question 3:** "And why do you say that?"

This special Roy Morgan Snap SMS survey was conducted with an Australia-wide cross-section of 1,423 Australians aged 18+ on Friday April 9 – Saturday April 10, 2021.

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For the 49% of Australians who approve of the way Prime Minister Scott Morrison is handling COVID-19 and all related issues the main reason is that Australia is in a better position than just about anywhere else in the world and this is a marker of the PM's good handling of COVID-19.

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Australia's management of COVID-19 has been recognised as one of the best in the world:

*"I think he has handled everything very well."*

*"He's handled it better than he did the whole fire debacle."*

*"I believe he has done a fairly good job at containing the spread etc."*

*"Australia is doing a lot better than other countries."*

*"Australia is the envy of the world right now – we are so incredibly lucky how we handled COVID. However, that doesn't mean that everybody shouldn't be vaccinated."*

*"He didn't lie about the risks and downplay it like Trump did."*

*"The Government is doing the best they can in these completely unpredictable times. We are still better off than almost anywhere else."*

*"He was under pressure – he did well."*

*"Looking at the rest of the world, with the exception of New Zealand and some African nations I'd say Australia has been damn good at handling things."*

*"We've kept Australian cases under control."*

*"Because it's unprecedented in these times and I think they've done well."*

*"Because of the results Australia is in a great position regarding COVID compared to other nations."*

*"We've never experienced a pandemic like this so it's all new."*

*"Our Prime Minister is doing everything that can be done to keep Australians safe. He is a great leader!"*

*"Because Australia has very obviously fared very well throughout the whole pandemic."*

*"There are very low cases in Australia and we've been able to keep our lifestyle relatively unchanged."*

*"He established the National Cabinet and has acted quickly to keep citizens safe."*

*"No one could have been prepared for COVID-19 and I think Scott Morrison has done the best he could with the available information he had. In comparison to other developed nations our economy has bounced back and we are almost back to normal. I couldn't ask more from a Federal Government."*

*"His leadership for his ministers is great and his designation of tasks to each are always exceptional."*

*"Responding to outbreaks, promoting vaccinations and attempting to get production of vaccines in Australia."*

*"One of the best performances of any country and an independent vaccine supply developed."*

*"On a global scale Australia's handling of the pandemic is a success."*

*"The disease is mostly under control in Australia and will be more so after the vaccines are distributed."*

*"We are doing better than other countries."*



The Prime Minister has stuck to the medical advice and listened to the advice of experts.

*"His response was prompt, measured and he followed the advice of medical professionals, scientists and experts in the field. Australia has benefitted from this response."*

*"He has listened to medical advice."*

*"I think he makes sense in everything he says. He encourages vaccination and wears a mask when not talking. He remains calm and defers to his medical advisor beside him."*

*"Morrison has displayed a pragmatic approach to a very complex problem and been guided by expert medical advice in an environment in which the facts are still emerging."*

*"He has mostly just done what the experts have told him to do."*

*"He's taking advice from the medical experts and has handled most of the issues well."*

*"He can't do anything more than go by the experts' recommendations until further results are in worldwide he is only going by their information."*

*"Morrison has listened to advice from medical experts and he hasn't rushed any decisions."*

Keeping the public informed on what was going on despite the changing circumstances and being transparent about issues with the vaccines.

*"He is fully informed on what is going on."*

*"He's kept the public informed with the available information as it came to hand."*

*"COVID-19 was a giant curve-ball for everyone and under the circumstances he has handled it well."*

*"I think he has tried to be transparent in all that has transpired. He has also displayed good leadership in a very difficult time."*

*"He is trying to do the right thing in obtaining vaccines for Australia but has been effected by the EU withholding supply. He and the States should work better together for a unified, clearer distribution but that comes down to co-operation from them as well as at a Federal level."*

*"Because I don't think the opposition can do any better, it's a pandemic and there are too many unknowns and vaccine supply being held up is from the supplier – not the Government's fault. It doesn't matter what Government was in it would still be the same result."*

*"It's generally been handled well although the vaccine rollout could have been better."*

*"I'm not sure what else he could have done considering the situation is always changing and evolving. There are so many different things to factor in."*

*"Given the complexity of the rollout and vaccine side-effects he and the ministry are rolling with the punches."*

*"He has had a very humble approach, and done the best with the information on hand. Scott Morrison has secured large amounts of the vaccine for Australia and helped the economy during trying times."*

*"I think we have got this far through the pandemic better than most countries and everyone and all institutions are having to adapt quickly and repeatedly make decisions rapidly and overall they haven't done badly – including the Prime Minister. If he could get more co-operation from the states things would be even better – no more closed state borders!"*

*"He has kept us up to date and given us an explanation for the delay in the vaccine which is due to other countries not sharing."*



Other respondents mentioned a considered and proportionate response that balances both the health outcomes as well as the economic issues and also balancing the competing needs of different stakeholders such as the States.

*"Because he's been able to manage the States."*

*"Any decisions Scott Morrison has made have taken into consideration the impact on all Australians and he's always reviewed the circumstances as they arise."*

*"His approach has seemed considerate and proportionate."*

*"He's been mostly sensible, not too extreme, but not too relaxed."*

*"He is following the advice of medical professionals and leading the country well through a crisis."*

*"He appears to be trying to appease those concerned with safety as well as look after the economy. He hasn't been extreme in either direction."*

*"This whole pandemic is new and the vaccination process is not to be without its setbacks."*

*"Because we haven't had a relapse and numerous infections however the vaccination program is slow."*

*"He's doing fine but been hampered by supplies not being delivered – but it's actually turned out well as we now have more vaccine information available."*

*"Vaccines are proving to be dangerous, so no vaccine for me. Mr. Morrison is doing the best he can in dreadful circumstances. The opening of borders including to New Zealand at present is sensible."*

*"He is dealing with circumstances beyond his control with conflicting reports on the safety of one of the vaccines and stupid State Premiers and stupid media causing trouble."*

### **Disapproval of Prime Minister Scott Morrison's handling of COVID-19 and all related issues focuses on the vaccine rollout as well as Morrison not being accountable for mistakes**

The 51% of Australians that disapprove of Morrison's handling of COVID-19 and related issues have consistently brought up the 'bungled' vaccine rollout and also the perception Morrison is always 'passing the blame' to the states and others for anything that goes wrong and taking credit when it is the states that have done the greater part of the job dealing with COVID.

Morrison is seen as not taking responsibility for anything and not being accountable for mistakes made in the Government's handling of COVID-19 as well as not being honest about what has caused problems and being more interested in spinning a situation

The 'bungled' vaccine roll-out is certainly top of mind for many respondents who disapprove of Morrison's handling of COVID-19

*"The vaccine rollout is happening so slowly and it should be happening faster."*

*"The poorly organised vaccine rollout that seems to always be changing and being pushed back."*

*"The vaccine rollout wasn't organized efficiently. There have been unnecessary delays and little transparency on what's happening."*

*"Vaccination rollout has been slow, confusing and disorganised."*

*"Largely due to over-promising and under-delivering in regards to the vaccine roll-out."*

*"He shirked responsibility for quarantine and bungled the vaccination program."*

*"We need to vaccinate faster."*

*"The vaccination program has appeared disorganised and it's difficult to obtain information about how/when to be vaccinated. Economic support has been rolled back too quickly."*

*"The delayed vaccine rollout, and poor communication, nothing is ever his fault."*



*"He's covered up many wrongs within his party and the COVID vaccination roll-out has been a shambles."*

*"The roll-out of the vaccine has been disastrous and the issues are being resolved much too slowly."*

*"The over-reliance on one brand of vaccine. He's over-promised and under-delivered."*

*"The roll-out of the vaccine is unnecessarily slow."*

*"I think we should have negotiated for more Pfizer vaccinations a long-time ago (or even other options like Moderna). It's been obvious that Astra Zeneca is less than ideal for many many months."*

*"There's been little to no national co-ordination. Who gets vaccinated varies depending on which vaccine site and what their rules are. GPs have not been appropriately supported to provide vaccination."*

*"He placed all his eggs in one basket while there are other vaccines eg. Johnson & Johnson which weren't approached."*

Many respondents also brought up the view that Morrison is always ready to 'shift the blame' to others – such as the states – for any 'stuff-ups' that have happened.

*"He hasn't done anything, all the successes have been from the States."*

*"He hasn't handled it – the majority of it has been left up to the states and territories in terms of borders."*

*"He has seemed absent with no cohesiveness between the states or leadership from the top."*

*"There's been a lack of ownership from him as well as helping the states combat the spread of the virus. Lots of blame shifting."*

*"He is trying to make all the States handling of COVID-19 look bad, purely to deflect from his and his party's inability to deal with their own short-comings in ALL areas!"*

*"All leadership has come from the State Premiers."*

*"He should have united our nation's response rather than creating State-based decision-making."*

*"He's offered plenty of criticism and little support to states and medical bodies."*

*"Because he's been slow at acquiring vaccines for us and then tried to shift the blame to the States."*

*"He's played politics from day 1, downplayed it's seriousness, attacked states for taking measures to reduce infection rates and then taken credit for the country's successful management!"*

*"The only good things he's done were close the international border and bring in JobKeeper. Most of the success we've had has been down to State Governments."*

*"He's let the States do the hard work and he hasn't organised the vaccine rollout."*

*"He's deferred most responsibility to the states and we're roughly 3.6 million doses shy of the 4 million shots he'd slated to be completed by March."*

*"The failure to take responsibility for vaccine deployment mishaps and passing of blame to the states."*

There is also a perception among many respondents that Morrison is always 'spinning' and 'marketing' himself and not on top of the issues that he should be dealing with as he's shirking responsibility.

*"No plan, no honesty in explaining delays, no responsibility. Scott Morrison's handling of every issue since he came into office has been abysmal, unAustralian and only politically motivated towards himself, his friends or to dig himself out of the holes he keeps digging himself."*

*"The bloke prefers a photo than a fix."*

*"He's made a mish mash of it. He's into marketing – not delivery."*

*"In my opinion he is a smug, condescending, patronising individual. Not to be trusted."*

*"A lack of transparency, ongoing spin, over-promises and under-delivers. Pure Scotty from Marketing."*



*"He has been slow, lied and avoided questions about the issues."*

*"I don't like Morrison. He also didn't close the borders well or run the hotels right."*

*"He has been reactive and misleading in his handling of everything from the Ruby Princess to the vaccine roll-out. It's all about spin doctoring and not about the application of sound reasoned judgment."*

*"It's been sloppily handled, poor regulation of the states and it should be a Federal issue run with the same restrictions across all states and the vaccine should be distributed in a similar way."*

*"He's too worried about the economy and not about health."*

*"He's corrupt and incompetent."*

*"Because they've failed at every task they set out to do."*

*"He's a smirking imbecile and failed bureaucrat that is allergic to work. Australia has every structural advantage with respect to the pandemic and he still conspires to screw everything up. No centralised quarantine plan, antagonising the state premiers and bungled vaccine rollout. He's useless."*

*"No accountability, no responsibility or ownership of anything."*

*"He has displayed no courage in standing up to Premiers locking us all down."*

*"He hasn't been honest about the issues of supply of the vaccine."*

*"He's a puppet of faceless men just like the 5 PMs before him."*

*"The quarantine systems have been inadequate for returning overseas travelers. He's demonstrated poor leadership by stating he will attend sporting events prior to the first lockdown and vaccines have not been coordinated or implemented well."*

*"The restrictions have been too excessive and not replacing Andrews when he's clearly a tool."*

*"The slow roll-out of the stimulus package. Instead of prioritising individuals for that stimulus he prioritised the big banks (with \$90 billion printed)."*

*"He screwed it up from the start and keeps screwing it up. He's almost as bad as dopey Dan Andrews."*

*"He withdrew JobKeeper and JobSeeker and he only cares about the rich. The vaccine roll-out has been a failure. The sooner he is voted out the better."*

*"He has shirked responsibility at every stage of this pandemic, and when he finally has to do something, he makes promises and then never follows through."*

**Michele Levine CEO Roy Morgan, says the nation is evenly split on Prime Minister Scott Morrison's handling of COVID-19 and all related issues with 49% approving and 51 % disapproving:**

*"Australians are almost evenly divided on how they view Prime Minister Scott Morrison's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic so far and while some demographics are in line with the national view and divided almost down the middle there are a few that stand-out in their views."*

*"A large majority of younger Australians aged under 35 (61%) and Victorians (62%) disapprove of Morrison's handling of COVID-19 while on the other side a clear majority of older Australians aged 65+ (62%) approve of the PM's handling of the pandemic. Morrison also enjoys a clear advantage with a majority of people in Queensland (55%) and NSW (54%) approving of his handling of COVID-19."*

*"The biggest issues for those that disapprove of Morrison's handling of COVID-19 centre around the vaccine roll-out with many calling it 'bungled', 'slow', 'disorganised', 'delayed', 'inefficient' and other disparaging terms critical of how it has progressed so far."*

*"The disapproval of Morrison's handling of COVID-19 also extends to a perception he is always trying to 'shift the blame' or shirk his responsibility. This often means blaming the States or even foreign powers such as the EU – who have held up shipments of vaccines to Australia."*

*"This perception extends to the sense that Morrison is more worried about the perceptions of how he is seen rather than getting on with the job and solving the issue – 'Scotty from Marketing' is a derisive term used by some to critique the Prime Minister."*



*“For those that approve of Morrison’s handling of COVID-19 the broader view of Australia’s handling of the virus compared to counterparts overseas comes through strongly. The current state of the vaccine roll-out is not a big deal for these people as they consider the overall situation in Australia to be so far ahead of overseas countries such as the United States and United Kingdom.*

*“As well as the favourable international comparisons there’s recognition amongst these people that this is a very challenging and unprecedented situation with many moving parts and changing circumstances from day-to-day – such as the EU block on vaccine exports to Australia.*

*“Given the challenging nature of responding to COVID-19 they say he’s responded well by listening to medical experts and implementing their recommendations as well as keeping the citizenry well-informed about what is going on. Many who approve mentioned the transparency and honesty of the Australian response compared to those overseas.*

*“There is still a year to go until the Federal Election and clearly the success of the vaccine roll-out and potential opening of (more) international borders over this period will play a key role in determining whether the L-NP Government is re-elected for a fourth term or the ALP can return to Government for the first time in nearly a decade.”*

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**For further comment or more information contact:**

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### **Approval of Scott Morrison’s handling of COVID-19 is highest among older Australians aged 65+**

Older Australians are easily the most likely to approve of Prime Minister Scott Morrison’s handling of all COVID-19 related issues with 62% approving compared to only 38% disapproving.

Their views are almost directly reversed by younger Australians aged under 35 of whom 61% disapprove of Morrison’s handling of all COVID-19 related issues compared to only 39% that approve.

People aged both 35-49 (49% approve cf. 51% disapprove) and 50-64 (50% approve cf. 50% disapprove) are almost equally split on the question.

There is little difference by gender with 50% of men approving and 50% disapproving of Morrison’s handling of all COVID-19 related issues while a small majority of 52% of women disapprove compared to 48% who approve.

### **Victoria is the weakest state for Morrison with 62% disapproving of his handling of COVID-19**

The results at a State level reveal where the lack of support lies for Morrison with 62% of Victorians disapproving of his handling of all COVID-19 related issues compared to only 38% who approve.

Interestingly small majorities of people in four States including NSW (54%), Queensland (55%), WA (51%) and Tasmania (52%) approve of the way Morrison has handled all COVID-19 related issues.

South Australians are evenly split with 50% approving and 50% disapproving.

On a regional level Morrison enjoys the approval of a slim majority of 51% of people in Country Areas compared to 49% that disapprove while this result is reversed for those in Capital Cities with 52% disapproving of his handling of all COVID-19 related issues and 48% approving.

### **L-NP supporters approve of Morrison’s handling of COVID-19 while ALP & Greens supporters don’t**

Unsurprisingly a clear majority of 60% of L-NP supporters approve of Prime Minister Scott Morrison’s handling of all COVID-19 related issues compared to 40% that disapprove.

In contrast nearly two-thirds of ALP supporters (64%) and Greens supporters (65%) disapprove of Morrison’s handling of all COVID-19 related issues compared to only 36% of ALP supporters and 35% of Greens supporters that approve.



Question: Thinking about Prime Minister Scott Morrison's handling of all COVID-19 related issues. Do you approve or disapprove?

By Gender & Age

	Australians 18+	Gender		Age			
		Men	Women	Under 35	35-49	50-64	65+
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Approve	49	50	48	39	49	50	62
Disapprove	51	50	52	61	51	50	38
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Thinking about Prime Minister Scott Morrison's handling of all COVID-19 related issues. Do you approve or disapprove?

By States & City/Country

	Australians 18+	Areas		States					
		Capital Cities	Country Regions	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Approve	49	48	51	54	38	55	51	50	52
Disapprove	51	52	49	46	62	45	49	50	48
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Thinking about Prime Minister Scott Morrison's handling of all COVID-19 related issues. Do you approve or disapprove?

By Party Vote (Federal)

	Electors	Party Vote				
		L-NP	ALP	Greens	Ind/Others	Can't say
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Approve	48	60	36	35	53	57
Disapprove	52	40	64	65	47	43
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

For further details on how Australians view Prime Minister Scott Morrison's handling of COVID-19 and all related issues please see this release: <http://www.roymorgan.com/findings/8678-roy-morgan-survey-on-vaccines-pfizer-morrison-april-12-2021-202104110838>



**About Roy Morgan**

Roy Morgan is Australia’s largest independent Australian research company, with offices in each state, as well as in the U.S. and U.K. A full-service research organisation, Roy Morgan has over 78 years’ experience collecting objective, independent information on consumers.

**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. Margin of error 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. 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%
1,000	±3.0	±2.7	±1.9	±1.3
1,500	±2.5	±2.2	±1.5	±1.1

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