

# Polling - Water and agriculture policy

## August 2019

The Australia Institute surveyed a nationally representative sample of 1,464 Australians about which agriculture and water policy goals should be prioritised. Respondents were asked:

Thinking of government policy on agriculture and water, particularly in the Murray Darling Basin, how should the following policy goals be prioritised?

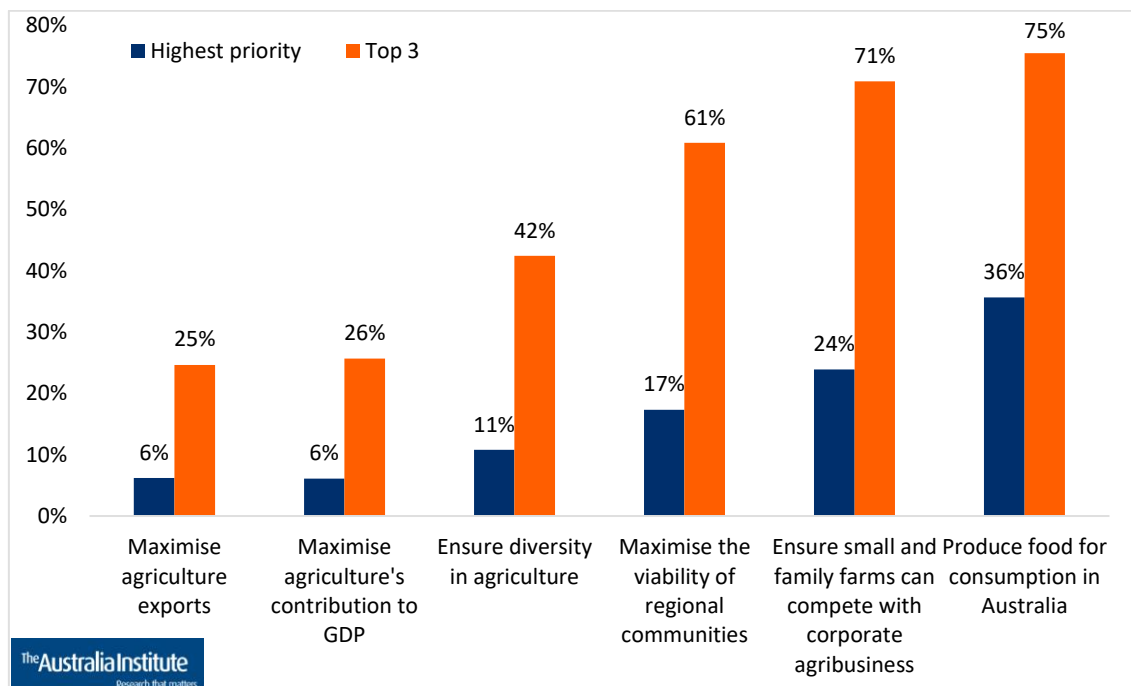
Respondents were asked to rank options in preferred order:

- Maximise agriculture's contribution to GDP
- Maximise agriculture exports
- Produce food for consumption in Australia
- Ensure diversity in agriculture
- Maximise the viability of regional communities
- Ensure small and family farms can compete with corporate agribusiness

A “don’t know/not sure” option was also provided.

Results show that **Australians prioritise community and food security policy goals above economic objectives**, as summarised in Figure 1 below:

**Figure 1: Water policy goals, highest priority and top 3 priorities**



- Producing food for consumption in Australia is a top three water policy priority for three in four Australians (75%).
  - It is also the highest priority for more Australians (36%) than any other policy.
  - One Nation voters and Independent/Other voters are particularly likely to identify producing food for consumption in Australia as their highest priority (41% and 45%, respectively).
  - It is the highest priority for 41% of Australians 65 years and over but just 29–30% of Australians under 35 years.
- Ensuring small and family farms can compete with corporate agribusiness is a top three water policy priority for seven in 10 Australians (71%).
  - It is the highest priority for one in four Australians (24%).
  - One Nation voters are particularly likely to have ensuring small farms are competitive as their highest priority (34%).
  - There is a clear divide by age, with 19–20% of people aged under 45 years choosing it as their highest priority compared to 26–29% of people aged 45 years and older.
- Maximising the viability of regional communities is a top three water policy priority for three in five Australians (61%).
  - It is the highest priority for 17% of Australians.
- Ensuring diversity in agriculture is a top three water policy priority for two in five Australians (42%).
  - It is the highest priority for 11% of Australians.
  - Greens voters are particularly likely to prioritise agricultural diversity, with 21% choosing it as their highest priority.
  - One Nation voters are particularly unlikely to prioritise agricultural diversity, with 3% choosing it as their highest priority.

**The two economic policy goals are not high priorities for most Australians.**

- Maximising agriculture’s contribution to GDP is a top three water policy priority for just one in four Australians (26%).
  - It is the highest priority for 6% of Australians.
  - It is the highest priority for one in 10 or less across every voting intention, age group, household income and across NSW, Victoria, Queensland and WA.
- Maximising agriculture exports is a top three water policy priority for only one in four Australians (25%).
  - It is the highest priority for 6% of Australians.
- Older Australians are particularly unlikely to prioritise economic goals.

- Just 6% of Australians aged 55 years or over chose maximising exports or contribution to GDP as their highest priority, compared to 19% of those aged under 35 years who did so.

Figure 2: Water policy goals, by priority

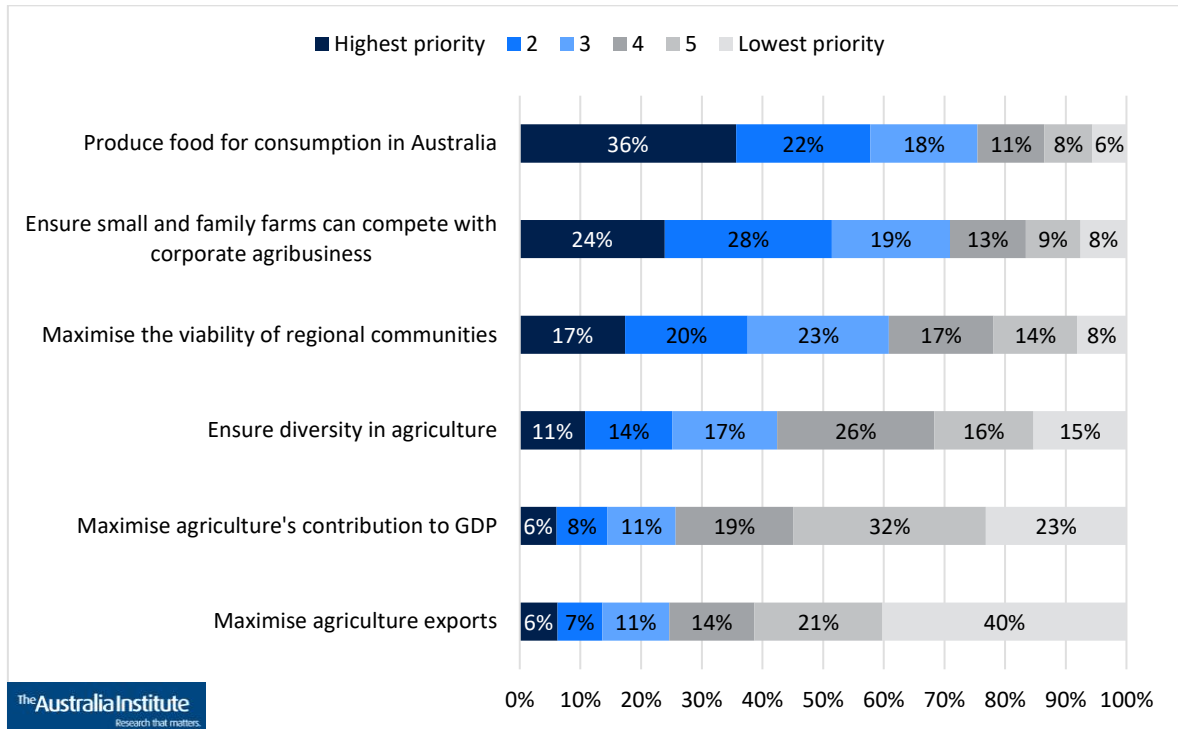
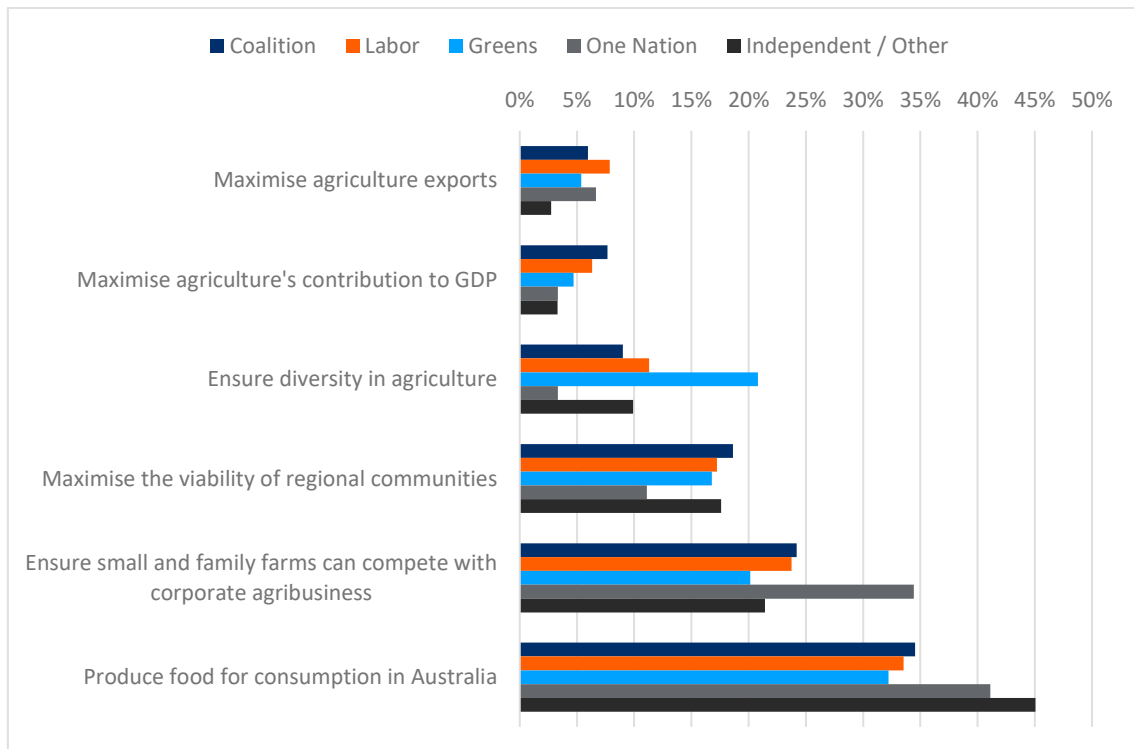


Figure 3: Water policy goals, by voting intention



## Method

The Australia Institute conducted a national survey of 1,464 people between 23 July 2019 and 30 July 2019, online through Dynata with nationally representative samples by gender, age, state and territory, and household income.

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 lower house. Those who were undecided were asked which way they were leaning; these leanings are included in voting intention crosstabs, but results are also shown separately for undecideds. “LNP” includes separate responses for Liberal and National. “Other” includes Centre Alliance, Jacqui Lambie Network and Independent/Other.

## Detailed results

*Thinking of government policy on agriculture and water, particularly in the Murray Darling Basin, how should the following policy goals be prioritised?*

### Maximise agriculture's contribution to GDP

|                         | Total | Male | Female | NSW | VIC | QLD | WA  |
|-------------------------|-------|------|--------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| <b>Highest priority</b> | 6%    | 7%   | 5%     | 7%  | 6%  | 7%  | 3%  |
| <b>2</b>                | 8%    | 10%  | 7%     | 8%  | 10% | 7%  | 7%  |
| <b>3</b>                | 11%   | 13%  | 10%    | 11% | 11% | 10% | 14% |
| <b>4</b>                | 19%   | 20%  | 19%    | 19% | 18% | 21% | 21% |
| <b>5</b>                | 32%   | 29%  | 35%    | 31% | 32% | 30% | 32% |
| <b>Lowest priority</b>  | 23%   | 22%  | 24%    | 24% | 22% | 25% | 23% |

|                         | Total | Coalition | Labor | Greens | One Nation | Other |
|-------------------------|-------|-----------|-------|--------|------------|-------|
| <b>Highest priority</b> | 6%    | 8%        | 6%    | 5%     | 3%         | 3%    |
| <b>2</b>                | 8%    | 10%       | 9%    | 5%     | 3%         | 7%    |
| <b>3</b>                | 11%   | 13%       | 9%    | 13%    | 10%        | 10%   |
| <b>4</b>                | 19%   | 21%       | 19%   | 16%    | 20%        | 16%   |
| <b>5</b>                | 32%   | 26%       | 32%   | 36%    | 34%        | 41%   |
| <b>Lowest priority</b>  | 23%   | 21%       | 24%   | 25%    | 29%        | 23%   |

### Maximise agriculture exports

|                         | Total | Male | Female | NSW | VIC | QLD | WA  |
|-------------------------|-------|------|--------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| <b>Highest priority</b> | 6%    | 8%   | 5%     | 5%  | 8%  | 6%  | 10% |
| <b>2</b>                | 7%    | 9%   | 6%     | 9%  | 7%  | 6%  | 9%  |
| <b>3</b>                | 11%   | 11%  | 11%    | 10% | 13% | 12% | 5%  |
| <b>4</b>                | 14%   | 15%  | 13%    | 12% | 13% | 18% | 14% |
| <b>5</b>                | 21%   | 21%  | 21%    | 21% | 21% | 20% | 22% |
| <b>Lowest priority</b>  | 40%   | 36%  | 44%    | 44% | 38% | 38% | 39% |

|                         | Total | Coalition | Labor | Greens | One Nation | Other |
|-------------------------|-------|-----------|-------|--------|------------|-------|
| <b>Highest priority</b> | 6%    | 6%        | 8%    | 5%     | 7%         | 3%    |
| <b>2</b>                | 7%    | 8%        | 6%    | 7%     | 11%        | 8%    |
| <b>3</b>                | 11%   | 9%        | 14%   | 11%    | 10%        | 8%    |
| <b>4</b>                | 14%   | 16%       | 12%   | 15%    | 21%        | 10%   |
| <b>5</b>                | 21%   | 23%       | 20%   | 19%    | 21%        | 21%   |
| <b>Lowest priority</b>  | 40%   | 38%       | 40%   | 42%    | 30%        | 50%   |

**Produce food for consumption in Australia**

|                         | Total | Male | Female | NSW | VIC | QLD | WA  |
|-------------------------|-------|------|--------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| <b>Highest priority</b> | 36%   | 34%  | 37%    | 34% | 35% | 37% | 32% |
| <b>2</b>                | 22%   | 21%  | 24%    | 24% | 21% | 22% | 18% |
| <b>3</b>                | 18%   | 19%  | 17%    | 19% | 18% | 16% | 23% |
| <b>4</b>                | 11%   | 12%  | 10%    | 9%  | 12% | 13% | 11% |
| <b>5</b>                | 8%    | 8%   | 8%     | 7%  | 9%  | 7%  | 12% |
| <b>Lowest priority</b>  | 6%    | 7%   | 5%     | 6%  | 5%  | 5%  | 5%  |

|                         | Total | Coalition | Labor | Greens | One Nation | Other |
|-------------------------|-------|-----------|-------|--------|------------|-------|
| <b>Highest priority</b> | 36%   | 35%       | 34%   | 32%    | 41%        | 45%   |
| <b>2</b>                | 22%   | 22%       | 23%   | 23%    | 21%        | 20%   |
| <b>3</b>                | 18%   | 17%       | 19%   | 13%    | 24%        | 17%   |
| <b>4</b>                | 11%   | 11%       | 12%   | 15%    | 8%         | 8%    |
| <b>5</b>                | 8%    | 10%       | 7%    | 9%     | 4%         | 4%    |
| <b>Lowest priority</b>  | 6%    | 6%        | 6%    | 7%     | 1%         | 5%    |

**Ensure diversity in agriculture**

|                         | Total | Male | Female | NSW | VIC | QLD | WA  |
|-------------------------|-------|------|--------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| <b>Highest priority</b> | 11%   | 11%  | 11%    | 11% | 11% | 9%  | 12% |
| <b>2</b>                | 14%   | 15%  | 14%    | 12% | 16% | 13% | 17% |
| <b>3</b>                | 17%   | 17%  | 18%    | 17% | 18% | 20% | 16% |
| <b>4</b>                | 26%   | 26%  | 26%    | 26% | 25% | 25% | 31% |
| <b>5</b>                | 16%   | 16%  | 16%    | 19% | 15% | 19% | 12% |
| <b>Lowest priority</b>  | 15%   | 15%  | 15%    | 16% | 15% | 16% | 12% |

|                         | Total | Coalition | Labor | Greens | One Nation | Other |
|-------------------------|-------|-----------|-------|--------|------------|-------|
| <b>Highest priority</b> | 11%   | 9%        | 11%   | 21%    | 3%         | 10%   |
| <b>2</b>                | 14%   | 15%       | 14%   | 17%    | 16%        | 11%   |
| <b>3</b>                | 17%   | 17%       | 18%   | 17%    | 16%        | 19%   |
| <b>4</b>                | 26%   | 25%       | 26%   | 21%    | 22%        | 34%   |
| <b>5</b>                | 16%   | 17%       | 17%   | 13%    | 21%        | 15%   |
| <b>Lowest priority</b>  | 15%   | 18%       | 15%   | 10%    | 22%        | 11%   |

**Maximise the viability of regional communities**

|                         | Total | Male | Female | NSW | VIC | QLD | WA  |
|-------------------------|-------|------|--------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| <b>Highest priority</b> | 17%   | 20%  | 15%    | 17% | 18% | 17% | 20% |
| <b>2</b>                | 20%   | 20%  | 20%    | 18% | 23% | 23% | 22% |
| <b>3</b>                | 23%   | 21%  | 25%    | 25% | 21% | 25% | 19% |
| <b>4</b>                | 17%   | 14%  | 20%    | 20% | 18% | 13% | 16% |
| <b>5</b>                | 14%   | 14%  | 13%    | 16% | 11% | 15% | 13% |
| <b>Lowest priority</b>  | 8%    | 10%  | 6%     | 5%  | 9%  | 8%  | 10% |

|                         | Total | Coalition | Labor | Greens | One Nation | Other |
|-------------------------|-------|-----------|-------|--------|------------|-------|
| <b>Highest priority</b> | 17%   | 19%       | 17%   | 17%    | 11%        | 18%   |
| <b>2</b>                | 20%   | 19%       | 21%   | 24%    | 20%        | 18%   |
| <b>3</b>                | 23%   | 23%       | 22%   | 20%    | 26%        | 29%   |
| <b>4</b>                | 17%   | 17%       | 18%   | 17%    | 18%        | 16%   |
| <b>5</b>                | 14%   | 15%       | 13%   | 14%    | 12%        | 13%   |
| <b>Lowest priority</b>  | 8%    | 7%        | 9%    | 7%     | 13%        | 7%    |

**Ensure small and family farms can compete with corporate agribusiness**

|                         | Total | Male | Female | NSW | VIC | QLD | WA  |
|-------------------------|-------|------|--------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| <b>Highest priority</b> | 24%   | 21%  | 27%    | 27% | 21% | 26% | 23% |
| <b>2</b>                | 28%   | 26%  | 29%    | 30% | 23% | 29% | 27% |
| <b>3</b>                | 19%   | 19%  | 20%    | 19% | 20% | 18% | 23% |
| <b>4</b>                | 13%   | 13%  | 12%    | 14% | 15% | 10% | 7%  |
| <b>5</b>                | 9%    | 12%  | 7%     | 6%  | 12% | 9%  | 10% |
| <b>Lowest priority</b>  | 8%    | 10%  | 5%     | 5%  | 10% | 8%  | 10% |

|                         | Total | Coalition | Labor | Greens | One Nation | Other |
|-------------------------|-------|-----------|-------|--------|------------|-------|
| <b>Highest priority</b> | 24%   | 24%       | 24%   | 20%    | 34%        | 21%   |
| <b>2</b>                | 28%   | 26%       | 27%   | 22%    | 29%        | 36%   |
| <b>3</b>                | 19%   | 20%       | 19%   | 26%    | 14%        | 18%   |
| <b>4</b>                | 13%   | 11%       | 13%   | 15%    | 11%        | 15%   |
| <b>5</b>                | 9%    | 9%        | 11%   | 8%     | 7%         | 5%    |
| <b>Lowest priority</b>  | 8%    | 9%        | 7%    | 9%     | 4%         | 5%    |