Polling – What would companies do with a tax cut?
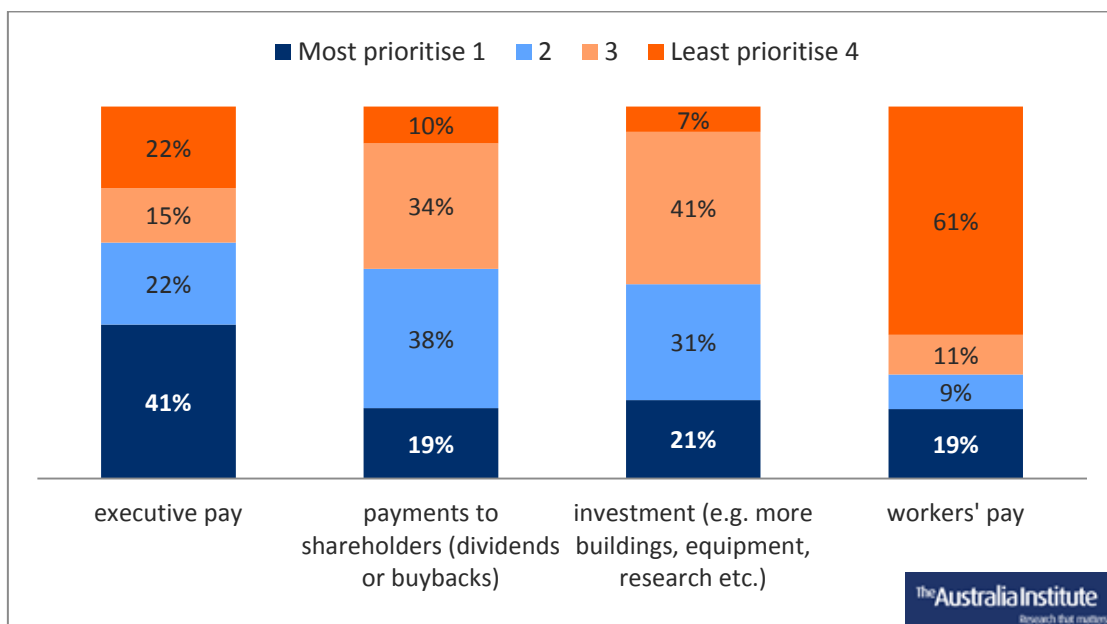
April 2018

Key Results

The Australia Institute surveyed 1,557 Australians about what they thought large companies would prioritise if they received a company tax cut. Respondents were asked to rank four options, putting first the option companies would most prioritise increasing, and putting last the option companies would least prioritise increasing.

Figure 1 shows full results while Figure 2 shows the 'top 2' and 'bottom 2' results grouped together.

Figure 1 – If large companies got a tax cut, what would they prioritise increasing? Full polling results

Legend: ■ Most prioritise 1 ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ Least prioritise 4

Category	Most prioritise 1	2	3	Least prioritise 4
executive pay	41%	22%	15%	22%
payments to shareholders (dividends or buybacks)	19%	38%	34%	10%
investment (e.g. more buildings, equipment, research etc.)	21%	31%	41%	7%
workers' pay	19%	9%	11%	61%

Figure 2 - If large companies got a tax cut, what would they prioritise increasing? Results by top 2 and bottom 2 priorities
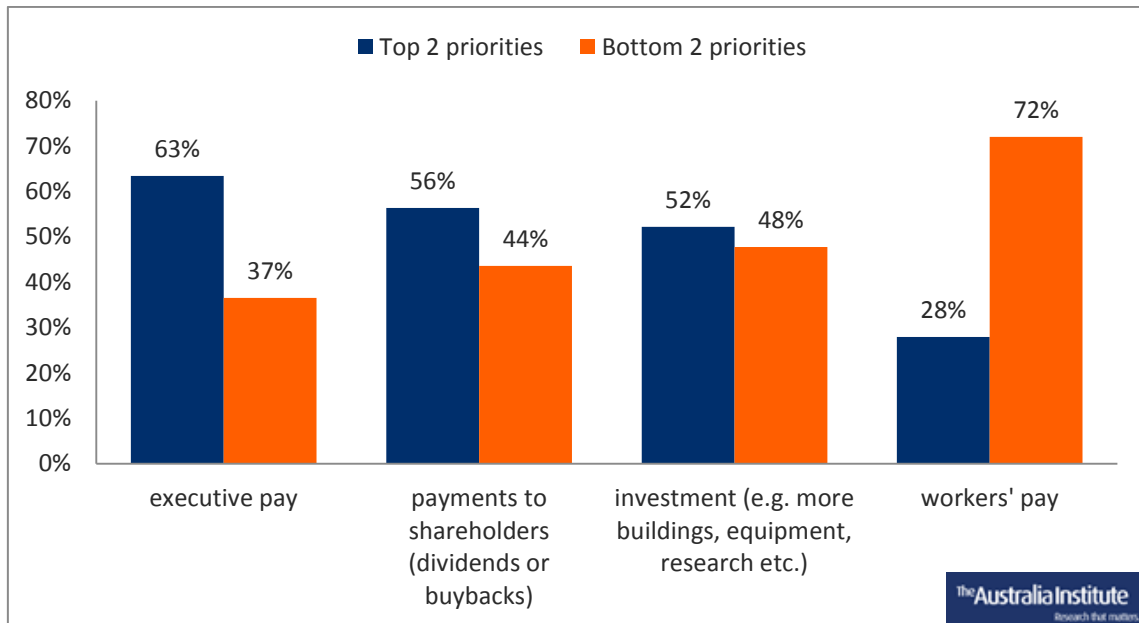
- If large companies got a tax cut, what would they prioritise increasing? 61% of respondents thought large companies receiving a company tax cut would put increasing worker's pay at the bottom of their priorities. 72% said it would be in the bottom two.
- 63% said increasing executive pay would be in the top two priorities, with 41% saying it would be the top priority.
- The second most highly prioritised option was payments to shareholders, with 56% putting it either first (19%) or second (38%).
- A close third was investment, for example in buildings, equipment and research, with 52% putting it either first (21%) or second (31%).

These results show a widespread view that managers of large companies would use benefits of a company tax cut primarily to benefit themselves and shareholders. While around half of respondents thought investment in new assets or research would be a first or second tier priority, three in four thought workers' pay would be a low priority.

These results helps to explain why earlier polling results have shown consistently high opposition to cutting company tax for large companies, in particular when confronted with the trade-off between a company tax cut and funding public services.

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Method

The Australia Institute conducted a national survey of 1,557 people between 27 March and 7 April 2018 online through Research Now with nationally representative samples by gender, age and state and territory.

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 Nick Xenophon Team and Independent/Other.

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Detailed results

If the Turnbull government succeeds in giving large companies a tax cut, what you believe these companies would be most likely to do with it?

If given a tax cut, large companies would prioritise increasing:

(Options presented in randomised order. Respondents had to rank each in order from "Most prioritise" to "least prioritise").

Executive pay

	Total	Male	Female	NSW	VIC	Qld	WA
Top 2	**63%**	61%	66%	61%	65%	66%	57%
Bottom 2	**37%**	39%	34%	39%	35%	34%	43%
Most prioritise 1	**41%**	37%	45%	39%	41%	45%	34%
2	**22%**	23%	21%	22%	24%	21%	23%
3	**15%**	14%	15%	15%	15%	15%	14%
Least prioritise 4	**22%**	25%	19%	24%	21%	19%	29%

	Total	LNP	ALP	GRN	PHON	Other	Undec
Top 2	**63%**	54%	70%	67%	70%	61%	64%
Bottom 2	**37%**	46%	30%	33%	30%	39%	36%
Most prioritise 1	**41%**	33%	47%	34%	55%	44%	44%
2	**22%**	21%	23%	33%	16%	18%	20%
3	**15%**	16%	12%	18%	13%	17%	16%
Least prioritise 4	**22%**	30%	18%	15%	16%	22%	20%

	<$40k	$40k-$80k	$80k-$100k	$100k-150k	$150k-200k	$200k+	Not sure/ not say
Top 2	65%	65%	60%	67%	55%	73%	58%
Bottom 2	35%	35%	40%	33%	45%	27%	42%
Most prioritise 1	44%	45%	39%	43%	38%	36%	39%
2	21%	21%	21%	23%	16%	38%	19%
3	14%	13%	18%	13%	14%	9%	17%
Least prioritise 4	21%	22%	23%	20%	31%	18%	25%

payments to shareholders (dividends or buybacks)

	Total	Male	Female	NSW	VIC	Qld	WA
Top 2	**56%**	62%	51%	57%	56%	58%	57%
Bottom 2	**44%**	38%	49%	43%	44%	42%	43%
Most prioritise 1	**19%**	23%	15%	19%	20%	18%	20%
2	**38%**	39%	36%	38%	37%	40%	38%
3	**34%**	30%	38%	32%	33%	35%	34%
Least prioritise 4	**10%**	9%	11%	11%	11%	8%	9%

	Total	LNP	ALP	GRN	PHON	Other	Undec
Top 2	**56%**	53%	57%	67%	55%	58%	56%
Bottom 2	**44%**	47%	43%	33%	45%	42%	44%
Most prioritise 1	**19%**	20%	18%	28%	15%	16%	18%
2	**38%**	34%	38%	40%	40%	42%	38%
3	**34%**	37%	33%	23%	37%	32%	34%
Least prioritise 4	**10%**	10%	10%	10%	8%	10%	9%

	<$40k	$40k-$80k	$80k-$100k	$100k-150k	$150k-200k	$200k+	Not sure/not say
Top 2	56%	47%	57%	62%	55%	51%	61%
Bottom 2	44%	53%	43%	38%	45%	49%	39%
Most prioritise 1	19%	11%	18%	22%	21%	22%	22%
2	37%	35%	40%	40%	34%	29%	39%
3	34%	41%	33%	28%	36%	36%	32%
Least prioritise 4	9%	12%	10%	10%	9%	13%	7%

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workers pay

	Total	Male	Female	NSW	VIC	Qld	WA
Top 2	**28%**	27%	29%	30%	27%	26%	32%
Bottom 2	**72%**	73%	71%	70%	73%	74%	68%
Most prioritise 1	**19%**	17%	20%	20%	17%	17%	22%
2	**9%**	10%	8%	9%	9%	8%	10%
3	**11%**	13%	9%	13%	10%	8%	11%
Least prioritise 4	**61%**	60%	62%	57%	63%	66%	57%

	Total	LNP	ALP	GRN	PHON	Other	Undec
Top 2	**28%**	32%	27%	24%	25%	25%	24%
Bottom 2	**72%**	68%	73%	76%	75%	75%	76%
Most prioritise 1	**19%**	18%	21%	17%	17%	17%	17%
2	**9%**	14%	7%	7%	8%	8%	8%
3	**11%**	15%	8%	9%	6%	11%	10%
Least prioritise 4	**61%**	54%	64%	67%	69%	64%	66%

	<$40k	$40k-$80k	$80k-$100k	$100k-150k	$150k-200k	$200k+	Not sure/ not say
Top 2	26%	30%	33%	23%	30%	24%	26%
Bottom 2	74%	70%	67%	77%	70%	76%	74%
Most prioritise 1	17%	19%	22%	15%	21%	13%	18%
2	10%	11%	11%	8%	9%	11%	8%
3	9%	12%	7%	13%	15%	16%	13%
Least prioritise 4	65%	58%	61%	64%	55%	60%	61%

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investment (e.g. more buildings, equipment, research etc.)

	Total	Male	Female	NSW	VIC	Qld	WA
Top 2	**52%**	51%	54%	53%	52%	50%	54%
Bottom 2	**48%**	49%	46%	47%	48%	50%	46%
Most prioritise 1	**21%**	23%	19%	21%	22%	20%	24%
2	**31%**	27%	35%	31%	30%	31%	30%
3	**41%**	43%	39%	40%	42%	42%	41%
Least prioritise 4	**7%**	6%	8%	7%	5%	8%	6%

	Total	LNP	ALP	GRN	PHON	Other	Undec
Top 2	**52%**	61%	46%	41%	50%	55%	55%
Bottom 2	**48%**	39%	54%	59%	50%	45%	45%
Most prioritise 1	**21%**	30%	14%	21%	13%	23%	21%
2	**31%**	31%	32%	20%	36%	32%	34%
3	**41%**	32%	46%	50%	44%	40%	40%
Least prioritise 4	**7%**	7%	7%	8%	7%	5%	5%

	<$40k	$40k-$80k	$80k-$100k	$100k-150k	$150k-200k	$200k+	Not sure/ not say
Top 2	52%	58%	50%	48%	60%	51%	55%
Bottom 2	48%	42%	50%	52%	40%	49%	45%
Most prioritise 1	21%	25%	22%	20%	20%	29%	21%
2	32%	33%	29%	29%	41%	22%	34%
3	43%	34%	43%	45%	35%	40%	38%
Least prioritise 4	5%	8%	7%	6%	5%	9%	6%

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