



# Ipsos Issues Monitor

## Archived commentaries

### November 2024

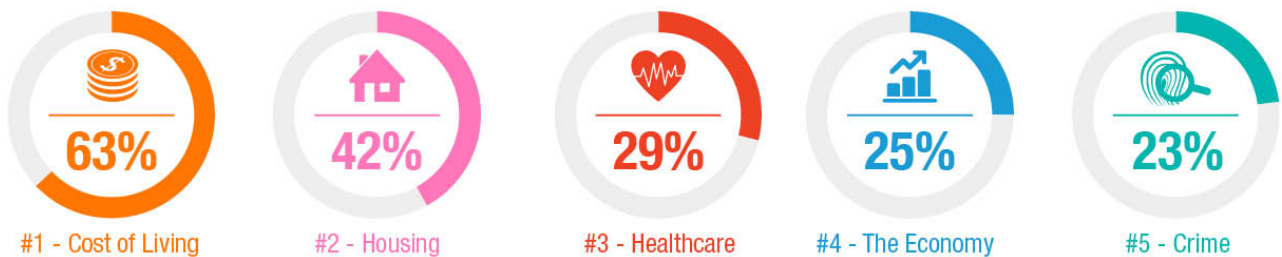
Cost of Living remained the primary concern for Australians (up 3 points to 66%). Housing held steady in second place at 42%, while the Economy climbed to third place (up 4 points to 29%), surpassing Healthcare, which decreased by one point to 28%. Crime also saw a three-point increase, rising to 26%, rounding out the top five concerns.



In terms of perceived capability in managing these issues, the Coalition maintained its position on Cost of Living, the Economy, and Crime, as well as regained lead in managing Housing. The ALP remained the preferred party for handling Healthcare.

### October 2024

Cost of Living remains the top concern for Australians (down 4 pts to 63%). Housing (42%, stable) held second place, while Healthcare increased (up 2 points to 29%), surpassing the Economy (down 2 points to 25%). Crime (23%, stable) remained unchanged in the fifth position.



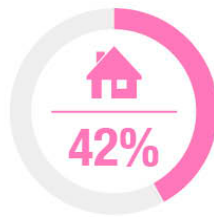
Regarding the perceived capability of managing these issues, the Coalition held its ground on Cost of Living, the Economy, and Crime, but the ALP has regained the lead on Housing from the Coalition and maintained its position on Healthcare.

### September 2024

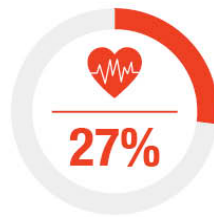
Cost of Living remains the biggest concern for Australians, with 67% selecting (up 1pt). Housing follows in second place (42% mentioning, down 1pt), while the Healthcare (27%, down 3pts) and the Economy (27%, down 4pts) were tied in third place. Crime rounds out the top five (23%, up 4 points), or 12 points higher than at the last federal election.



#1 - Cost of Living



#2 - Housing



#3 - Healthcare



#4 - The Economy



#5 - Crime

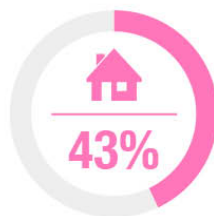
In terms of party most capable of managing issues, the ALP face challenges left and right. On the right, while the ALP lead on Healthcare alone, the Coalition lead on four issues: Cost of Living, Housing, The Economy and Crime. On the left, the ALP have lost ground to the Greens on Housing since the last election.

## August 2024

Cost of Living remains the number one concern for Australians with 66% selecting (up 3pts). Housing is second (43% mentioning, up 1pt), while the Economy rose to third place (31%, up 4pts), pushing Healthcare to fourth (30%, up 2pts). Mention of Crime fell 4 points to 19% a level last observed in January this year.



#1 - Cost of Living



#2 - Housing



#3 - The Economy



#4 - Healthcare



#5 - Crime

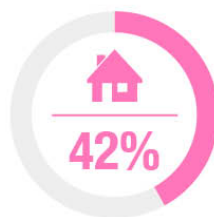
The ALP and the Coalition were tied as parties most capable of managing Cost of Living and Housing. However, the ALP maintained its lead in managing Healthcare, while the Coalition is seen as more capable in managing the Economy and Crime.

## July 2024

While weaker than expected inflation figures have reduced the chance of further rate increases, Cost of Living remains the most pressing issue for Australians 63% (down 2pts) reporting it as their top concern. Housing remained in second place with 42% mentioning (up 1 pt). Healthcare was the third most cited concern (28%, up 1pt), with The Economy falling to fourth place (27%, down 2pts). Mention of Crime was stable at 23%.



#1 - Cost of Living



#2 - Housing



#3 - Healthcare



#4 - The Economy



#5 - Crime

Concerns about Immigration have been increasing steadily throughout the term of the Albanese government. One in twenty (5%) selected Immigration as a top concern in May 2022. Since then, the number has more than doubled with 13% selecting in July 2024.

The ALP maintains its hold as the party viewed most capable of handling the top three issues: Cost of Living, Housing, and Healthcare. Meanwhile the Coalition has maintained its lead in managing The Economy and Crime.

## June 2024

With the financial year drawing to a close and 'Stage Three' tax cuts looming, Cost of Living remains the issue of greatest concern to Australians (65%, stable). Housing was the second (41%, down 4pts) falling to levels last observed in January this year. Concern about the Economy increased (29%, up 5pts) to third place, knocking Healthcare (27%, down 3 pts) to fourth place, with Crime (23%, down 4pts) rounding out the top five.



The ALP maintains its hold as the party viewed most capable of managing the top four issues: Cost of Living, Housing, The Economy, and Healthcare. The Coalition maintains the lead as most capable of managing Crime.

## May 2024

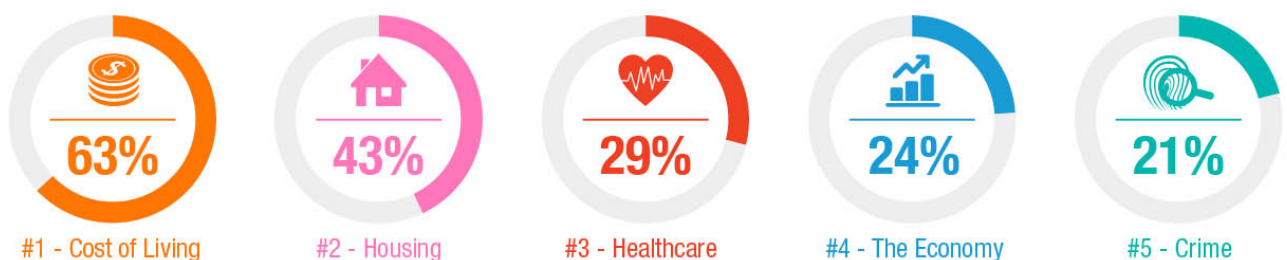
For the 27th consecutive month, Cost of Living remains the top concern for Australians, with 65% (+2pts) citing it as their biggest concern. Housing concerns have also risen, matching the previous Issues Monitor high of February 2024 (45%, +2pts). Healthcare takes third place (30%, +1pt) while Crime has risen to fourth most common concern, at levels not seen since 2018 (27%, +6pts). The Economy rounds out the top five (24%).



The ALP regained its lead as the party viewed most capable of managing the top three issues: Cost of Living, Housing, and Healthcare. The ALP also regained its lead on the Economy, but the Coalition regained a narrow lead on Crime.

## April 2024

The Cost of Living crisis grinds on with the issue recording its 26th consecutive month in the top spot (63%, +2pts). Housing follows (43%, +1pts) with Healthcare third (29%), and the Economy (24%, -5pts), and Crime (21%, -1pts) rounding out the top five.



The ALP and Coalition are tied as party most capable of managing the two top issues, Cost of Living and Housing. The ALP leads on Healthcare, and has regained a narrow lead (+1 pt) on Crime. The Coalition retain a narrow lead on the Economy (+1pt).

## March 2024

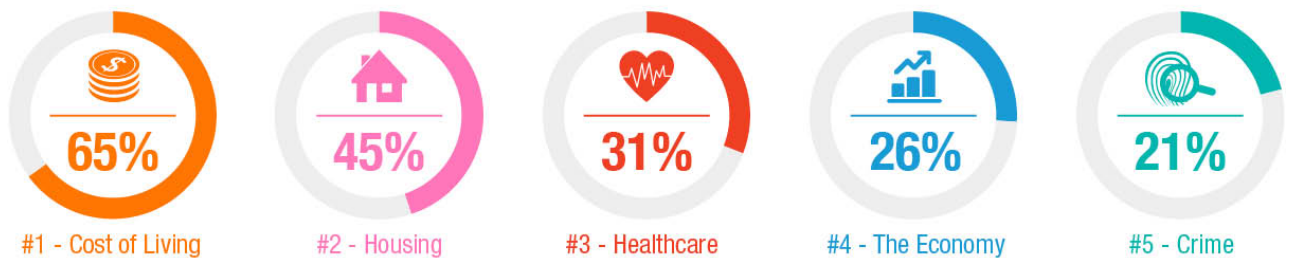
Cost of living remains the top issue for Australians in March 2024 (61%, -4pts). It has held this place for the over two years despite dropping to levels last observed in April 2023 (59%). The remaining top five issues are the same, with Housing (42%, -3pts) in second place, followed by Healthcare (29%, -2pts), the Economy (29%, +3pts), and Crime (22%, +1pts).



The ALP maintained its lead as the party viewed most capable of managing the top three issues: Cost of Living, Housing, and Healthcare. However, the Coalition is back in the lead as the party most capable of managing the Economy and Crime.

## February 2024

Cost of Living (65%) remains the issue of greatest concern to Australians. Cost of Living has now been our top concern each month for two years. The cumulative impact of interest rate increases, a rental crisis, and high house prices saw Housing reach a new Issues Monitor high (45%), and remaining the second most cited concern. Healthcare (31%), the Economy (26%) and Crime (21%) round out the top five.



The Albanese government maintained its lead on the Coalition as the party most capable of managing each of the top five issues.

## January 2024

The year is new but our concerns are the same. Cost of Living remains the issue of greatest concern at 65% in January (+3 points), reaching its highest point since June 2023. This marks the 23rd consecutive month Cost of Living has been top issue, the longest run as top issue in tracker history. Housing remains in second place at 41%, followed by Healthcare (30%). The Economy (28%) and Crime (19%) round out the top 5.



The ALP is seen as the party most capable of handling the top three issues; Cost of Living, Housing and Healthcare. The Coalition is seen as the party most capable of handling The Economy and Crime.

## December 2023

The year 2023 closed with Cost of Living being the issue of greatest concern to Australians (62%). Cost of Living not only remained the top concern throughout 2023, but also hit an Issues Monitor high of 68% in June 2023. This incredible high created an unusually large gap between the top two concerns, with this large gap being evident for much of 2023.



Increasing interest rates, a rental crisis, and high house prices saw Housing rise to the second most common concern in March 2023 (36%). Housing continued to hold this place for the remainder of the year. An additional Issues Monitor high was set this year for Housing at 42% in August, finishing up at 41% in December.

Healthcare was the third most common concern in December 2023 (30%) followed by the Economy (27%). Healthcare took an unusual turn out of the top 3 in March, June and July, having been knocked down to fourth place as the Economy took third. Further accentuating the financial difficulties faced by Australians this year.

Crime rounded out the top 5 for December 2023 at 17%. Meanwhile, conflict in the Middle East in the later part of the year, as well as a low Australian dollar, saw fuel prices increase this year, pushing Petrol Prices into fifth places for several months of 2023.

ALP finished the year as the party believed most capable of handling the top three issues; Cost of Living, Housing and Healthcare, tying with the Coalition for capability to handle the Economy. The Coalition continues to be voted the party most capable of handling Crime.

## November 2023

Cost of Living (64%) and Housing (40%) remain the top two concerns facing Australians, with The Economy rising to third place (29%). Healthcare is the fourth most cited issues at 28%, the lowest it's been since June 2020, immediately before the second wave of Covid-19 in Australia. Petrol Prices (18%) rounds out the top five.



As the cost-of-living crisis continues, perceptions of the party most capable of handling the top five issues shifts to the Coalition. More Australians now see the Coalition as most capable of handling Cost of Living, The Economy and Petrol Prices – the first time the Coalition has been ahead since the May 2022 Federal election. Labor remains the party seen as most capable of handling Housing and Healthcare.

## October 2023

The top four concerns remain stable in the October Ipsos Issues Monitor, with Cost of Living the top issue followed by Housing, Healthcare and the Economy. Conflict in the Middle East and a low Australian dollar saw fuel prices increase, pushing Petrol Prices into fifth place (+4 pts) for the first time since April 2023.



Labor leads the Coalition as the party most capable of each top five issue. Among these, Labor's lead was greatest for Healthcare (+8 pts). Compared with results at the time of the most recent federal election, May 2022, the Coalition are viewed as significantly less capable of handling Housing, Healthcare, the Economy and Petrol Prices.

## September 2023

Cost of Living remains the top issue for Australians and the vast majority are concerned about it.

Cost of Living remains the top issue for Australians with 62% selecting it as one of their three issues of concern (stable). Housing stays in second place (38% -4pts), easing from a record setting high in August. Healthcare is in 3rd place (30% -1pts) with the Economy (28% -1pt) and Crime (20% -2pts) rounding out the top five. Just outside the top five, concern about the Environment (18%, +2pts) is climbing after unseasonable heat and confirmation of an El Nino weather cycle.



Labor continues to lead the Coalition as the party most capable of managing the top three concerns: Cost of living (+2 pts), Housing (+6 pts) and Healthcare (+9 pts). Consistent with August 2023, Labor and the Coalition are on par as the party most capable of managing the Economy and Crime.

This time around we asked more questions about cost of living, the results revealed that 8-in-10 Australians are worried about the escalating cost of living. Of this group, half (51%) expressed being 'very concerned' about this issue.

Concerns about cost of living have encouraged Australians to shop around for better deals. The survey identified insurance (60%), grocery shopping (59%), and energy (56%) as the primary areas where Australians are likely to seek better deals to alleviate the burden of rising living costs.

## August 2023

The compounding impact of 13 interest rate increases in 15 months keeps Cost of Living our top concern, steady at 62%. Concern about Housing rose to a new Issues Monitor high of 42%, beating the previous high for this concern (40%) set in April this year. Healthcare returns to third place at 31% (+2 pts) overtaking the Economy (29%, -3 pts) with Crime (20%, -1 pt) rounding out the top five.



Labor leads the Coalition as the party most capable of managing the top three concerns: Cost of Living (+ 3 pts), Housing (+ 6 pts) and Healthcare (+ 20 pts). The Coalition has gained ground on managing the Economy and Crime – now on par with Labor for the first time since the May 2022 election.

## July 2023

Cost of living remains the top concern, at near-record levels with three in five (62%, -6 pts) selecting. Housing the second highest concern (39%, stable) seven points clear of the Economy (32%, - 1 pts) in third. Healthcare (29%, stable) and Crime (21%, + 3 pts) round out the top five.



Labor continues to lead the Coalition as the party most capable of managing each top five issue with the lead greatest for Healthcare (+16 pts), and Housing (+ 9 pts). While this continued lead is good news for the Albanese government, sizeable minorities stated “do not know” or “none”.

## June 2023

Cost of living concerns reach an all-time Issues Monitor high of 68% (+6 points) following the 12th interest rate rise since May 2022. Cost of Living concerns remain well above Housing (39%, -1pt) and the Economy (33%, +2pts), the second and third highest issues respectively. Healthcare (29% -7pt) – a concern rarely out of the top three – fell to fourth place in June with Crime (18%, +3pts) rounding out the top five.



Labor leads the Coalition as the party most capable of managing each top five issue. Among these, Labor’s lead was greatest for Healthcare (+14pts), and for the issue of greatest concern to the nation (Cost of Living) the ALP have a 4 point lead.

## May 2023

Following the recent Federal budget and latest official interest rate rise (increase of 0.25% to 3.85%), Cost of living remains the issue of most concern to Australians (62% +3pts). Concern over Cost of Living is well above that of any other issue and has been for many months.



Housing is still the 2nd highest cited issue (39%, -1pt), with Healthcare in 3rd place (36%, +2pts) and the Economy (31%, +3pts) the issue of fourth highest concern. Crime (15%, unchanged) and Environment (15%, -1pt) round off the top fifth and sixth cited issues.

The ALP again leads as the party seen as most capable of tackling all the top issues than the Coalition. Compared to views in May 2022 at the time of the last Federal election, the Coalition are viewed as significantly less capable of handling Housing, Healthcare, The Economy and Crime.

## April 2023

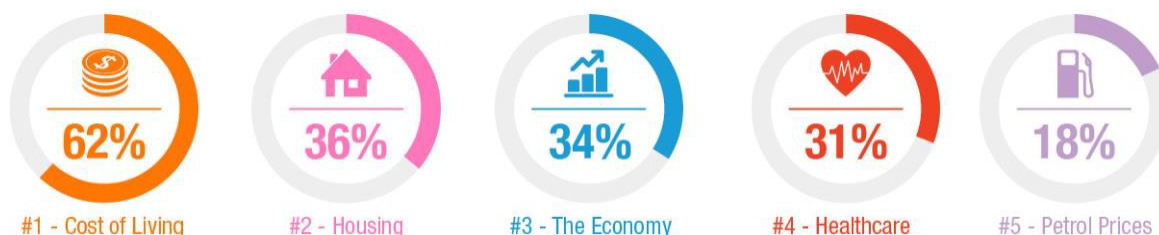
With the federal budget approaching, economic concerns dominate. Cost of living remains the top issue (59% -3pts since March). It has been the top issue since February 2022 and remains well above Housing, the next most cited concern. Housing (40%, +4pts) has reached a new Ipsos Issues Monitor high beating the previous mark set just last month. Healthcare (34%, + 3pts) is in 3rd place with the Economy (28%, -6pts) and Petrol Prices (18%, stable) round out the top five.



The ALP maintains its lead as party most capable of managing all issues. Among Top 5 concerns, the ALP lead was greatest for Healthcare (+ 14 pts). The largest lead for the ALP overall was for Indigenous Issues (+ 18 pts) particularly relevant in the month the federal Liberal party confirmed its opposition to the Voice. While the Yes camp would no doubt have welcomed bipartisan support, it should be some comfort that relatively few Australians view the Coalition as the party most capable of managing Indigenous Issues.

## March 2023

Cost of living is again the top issue in the March Ipsos Issues Monitor (62% -1pt since last month) with only minimal reduction in concern since February. This issue has been the top issue of concern for Australians since February 2022, likely reflecting the impact of inflation and continued interest rate rises over this period, (currently at 3.6%), and suggesting concerns over financial uncertainty and impact on households. Housing has risen to being the issue of 2nd highest concern, at an all-time Ipsos Issues Monitor high (36%, +2pts), with concern over the economy in 3rd place (34%, +6pts).





With the surge in concerns over financial issues, Healthcare (31%, -8pts) has fallen to fourth place, and Petrol Prices (18%, -1pt) remains the fifth highest issue of concern.

Four of the five top issues of concern are closely linked being financial in nature again reflecting public perception about the economic climate.

The ALP again leads as the party seen as most capable of tackling top issues of concern. This is particularly the case for Healthcare and Petrol prices where the ALP are viewed as significantly more capable than at the last election, and in contrast, the Coalition are considered significantly less capable in these areas.

## February 2023

The growing strain on household budgets has driven another new highpoint in concern for any issue since the Ipsos Issues Monitor began in 2010. Following another 25-point increase to official interest rates the day fieldwork started in early February, and further interest rate increases over the months ahead flagged by the Reserve Bank of Australia, Cost of Living is now identified as the issue of greatest concern by 63% of Australians, five points higher than last month.

Concern over Healthcare (39%, +4pts), gradually trending upwards over the past quarter, is the next highest issue. Housing (34%, +4%) has become the third of greatest concern, overtaking The Economy (28%, -4%) which is now a long way the levels reported in the first six months of Covid-19 where concern reached 56% in September 2020. Petrol Prices (19%, unchanged) and Environment (18%, -2pts) are of issues of fifth and sixth concern.



The ALP maintains its lead over the Coalition as the party most capable of managing each of the top five issues. The Coalition is viewed as significantly less capable of managing Healthcare, The Economy, Housing and The Environment compared with May 2022, before the last Federal election. The Greens remain the party seen as most capable of handling Environmental issues.

## January 2022

Findings for the first Ipsos Issues Monitor for 2023 are now available. For the 11th consecutive month, Cost of Living is the issue of greatest concern in January. With continued official interest rate rises (now at 3.35%) and financial uncertainty, it remains at an all-time high of 58%, well ahead of the next issue, Healthcare at 35% (-1 pt).



The Economy (31%, -2pts) and Housing (30%, -1pt) remain third and fourth concerns. While the top 4 concerns remain consistent, Environment became the fifth concern (20%, +1pt) replacing petrol prices (19%, -3pts) the change likely driven by a combination of extreme weather events and declining petrol prices after the holiday peak.

The ALP maintains its lead over the Coalition as the party most capable of managing each of the top five issues. The Coalition is viewed as significantly less capable of managing Healthcare, The Economy, Housing and The Environment compared with May 2022, before the last Federal election. The Greens remain the party seen as most capable of handling Environmental issues.

## December 2022

Cost of living remains the issue of greatest concern to Australians as they prepare to welcome in the new year (58%, unchanged from November). Back in January, with the impact of Covid-19 still being felt, the Ipsos Issues Monitor showed concerns around cost of living (32%) fairly stable, trailing Healthcare (48%), The Economy (36%) and Housing (33%). The Environment was the next highest issue of concern (21%).

Over the course of 2022 Covid restrictions have been removed but health systems across the country continue to be under pressure as Covid infections, hospitalisations and deaths continue. While reduced from the level in January, concern over Healthcare returns to second place (36%, +4pts on November).

As movement of key Australian financial indicators has accelerated throughout the year, four of the top five issues of concern in December, including Cost of Living, are financial. Official interest rates have increased eight times from a low of 0.1% in January to 3.1% in December and CPI up from 3.5% to 7.3% to the end of the September quarter, both long-term highs. Seasonally adjusted unemployment has reduced from 4.2% to 3.4% in November, a long-term low. The Issues Monitor finds concern over the Economy (33%, unchanged) dropping to third place, ahead of Housing (31%, +1pt) and Petrol Prices (22%, -3pts).

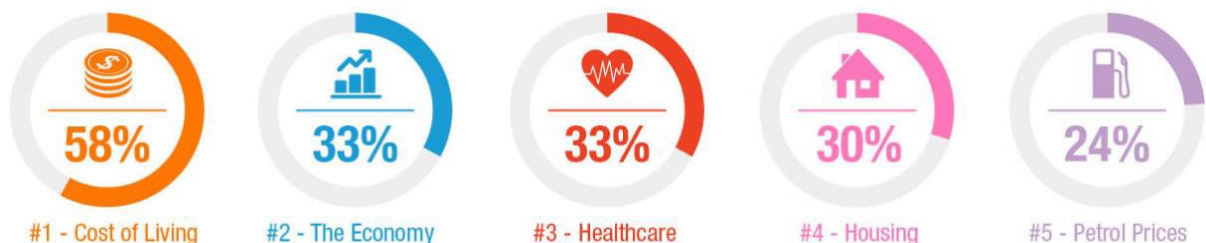


Concern over the Environment in 2022 has remained fairly stable across the year despite serious weather events and record floods in the eastern states, with one in five Australians identifying it as their main concern (19%, -2pts).

On the post-election political front, the ALP has closed the year maintaining their substantial lead over the Coalition as the party most capable of managing all of the top five issues. The Coalition is rated significantly lower on all five items than they were in May, prior to the election, and the ALP significantly higher than they were in May on Healthcare, The Economy and Petrol Prices.

## November 2022

Australians continue to view Cost of Living as the issue of greatest concern in the November Ipsos Issues Monitor. At almost three in five people (58%, +3pts\* from October), a record high, concern over Cost of Living is well above that of the second and third issue. This wave of the Issues monitor has an economic backdrop of monthly increases in official interest rates (now at 2.85%), growing Consumer Price Index (7.3% for the twelve months to end of September quarter) and unemployment rates (3.4%) at their lowest point since the 1970s.



The Economy (33%, +1pt) has remained fairly stable throughout 2022, in contrast to Healthcare (33%, -6pts) which has been more volatile but trending downwards since a year-high of 48% in January when it registered as the top issue.

Housing (30%, -1pt), Petrol Prices (24%, no change) and the Environment (22%, +2pts) have also held onto their relative positions of fourth, fifth and sixth issues for the fifth consecutive month.

The Labor government maintains a substantial lead over the opposition on their capability of managing all of the top five issues. The issue with the biggest change of relative capability between October and November was Healthcare, where the ALP lead over the coalition decreased by 6 percentage points from, 18pts to 12pts. Despite this, consistent with their loss of government and reduction of seats in parliament, the Coalition continues to be rated significantly lower on each of these issues than it was in May, prior to the federal election.

## October 2022

The October Ipsos Issues Monitor finds Australians' greatest concerns mostly unchanged since last month. Cost of Living was the biggest concern for over half of Australian adults (56%, -1pt from Sept) as the Consumer Price Index for the twelve months to the September quarter hit 7.3% and official interest rates were raised for the sixth consecutive month this year.



Healthcare (39%, +1pt) and the Economy (32%, -1pt), second and third concerns, are both well below their record 2020 pandemic driven peaks of 55% and 56% respectively. While concern over the Economy has been trending down since September 2020, Healthcare has continued to trend upwards since the June 2020 low of 24%.

For the next three issues of greatest concern this month, Housing (31%, +3pts) had the largest upward shift for any issue, Petrol Prices was stable (24%, unchanged) and the Environment (20%, -3pts) had the greatest reduction in concern.

The Coalition was seen as significantly less capable of managing each of the top five issues of concern than it was immediately prior to the May federal election. However, the increased lead the ALP enjoyed over the Coalition on most of these items in September returned to the levels seen in August.

The ALP leads the coalition on Cost of Living (+9pts, September gap was +13pts); Healthcare (+18pts, unchanged); the Economy (+4pts, Sept +10pts); Housing (+11pts, Sept +16pt); and Petrol Prices (+4pts, Sept +13pts).

Whether the narrowing gap on these financially driven issues is temporary, or an indication the government's post-election gloss is fading, will become clearer over coming months.

## September 2022

Cost of Living remains the issue of greatest concern for Australians in September 2022. As the temporary cut to the fuel excise ends, and Consumer Price Index and official interest rates continue to rise, Cost of Living (57%, -1pt from Aug) sits at near-record high levels.



Cost of Living (58%, +2pts from July) has been the top issue for the past six months, Healthcare, our second greatest concern (38%, -6pts), fell as Covid cases decline after a winter peak. Concern about the Economy (33%, +2pts), Housing (28%, -2pts), and Petrol Prices (24%, stable) round out the top five. Almost a quarter of Australians (23%, +1pt) regard the Environment as a top concern.

The honeymoon continues for Labor with the ALP leading the Coalition as the party most capable of managing all top five issues of greatest concern: Cost of Living (+13pts to ALP); Healthcare (+18pts to ALP); The Economy (+10 pts to ALP); Housing (+16 pts to ALP); and Petrol Prices (+13 to ALP).

Most notable here is the 10pt lead to the ALP on The Economy – a traditional area of strength for the Coalition – and surely a gap the opposition is keen to close.

## August 2022

Cost of Living and Healthcare are the two issues of greatest concern for Australians in August 2022 as the Consumer Price Index and official interest rates continue to rise, and the health system remains under pressure.



Cost of Living (58%, +2pts from July) has been the top issue for the past six months, returning to the level observed in June, a record high for any issue since the Ipsos Issues Monitor started in 2010.

Concern over Healthcare (44%, +6pts) has increased for the second month in a row and is substantially higher than The Economy (31%, unchanged), and Housing (30%, +4pts). The reduction in fuel prices in the past month sees reduced concern over Petrol Prices (24%, -5pts) and one in five Australians (22%, -1pt) continue to regard the Environment as a top concern.

The new Labor government has just marked 100 days in office, and the ongoing honeymoon period is evident in the ALP lead over the Coalition as the party most capable of managing all top five issues of greatest concern. Not only does it now lead on each issue, but the gap between the parties has grown substantially: Cost of Living (+11pts to ALP, +7 pts on the gap in May prior to the election); Healthcare (+18 ALP, +15); The Economy (+4, +10); Housing (+11 ALP, +10); and Petrol Prices (+11 ALP, +14).

How much this is the result of government performance to-date, or post-election changes to personnel on the opposition benches is unclear. Regardless, the government has rapidly developed an aura of control on the things Australians feel most concerned about.

## July 2022

Cost of Living remains the top issue of concern for Australians (56%, -2pts from June) for the fifth month in a row as the Reserve Bank pushed interest rates up to 1.35%, the highest level since June 2019.



Well behind Cost of Living, Healthcare (38%) follows as the second issue of concern, up three points from June, reflecting the challenges increasing Covid-19 cases and hospitalisations are having on the nation's health systems. The Economy (31%, -2pts), Petrol Prices (29%, +1pt) and Housing (27%, -3pts) complete the top five issues. Further flooding events in New South Wales and Queensland coincide with the Environment being flagged as a top concern by one in four Australians (23%), three points up on last month.

Less than two months after the federal election, Labor maintains its lead over the Coalition as the party most capable of managing all top five issues. Although the coalition ratings are significantly lower on each measure than in May, prior to the election, it has largely closed the gap on managing the Economy (+1pt to ALP, -5 from June) and reduced the gap slightly on Housing (+10 ALP, -3) and Healthcare (+18 ALP, -2). The gap between the parties on Cost of Living remains unchanged (+9 ALP) and the ALP has increased its lead on managing Petrol Prices (+11 ALP, +2).

## June 2022

Cost of Living concerns dominate with three in five Australians (58%) selecting this as a top issue. Cost of Living concern, which is up 6 points from May and 26 points from January, is now at record high levels – no issue has polled higher since this monitor was established in 2010.

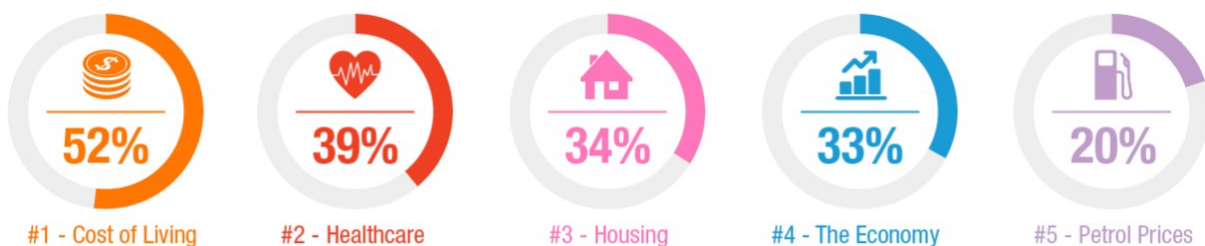


The remaining top issues for June are clustered well below Cost of Living. The second most selected issue is Healthcare (35%, down 4 points) followed by The Economy (33%, steady), and Housing (30%, down 4 points). With prices again increasing despite the temporary reduction in the fuel excise, concern about Petrol Prices has increased (up 8 points to 28%).

Despite these significant Cost of Living challenges, the Albanese government is enjoying a honeymoon. Labor leads the Coalition as the party capable of managing each of the nation's top five issues: Cost of Living (9 points lead); Healthcare (20 points); The Economy (6 points); Housing (13 points); and Petrol Prices (9 points). Ratings of the Coalition as the party most capable have declined significantly on each.

## May 2022

As Australia approaches the conclusion of the 2022 Federal election campaign, the May Ipsos Issues Monitor finds concerns over Cost of Living at another all-time high. Hitting 52% (+2pts vs April), Cost of Living is well ahead of the next issue, Healthcare (39%), which remains unchanged for the third consecutive month.



Following the Reserve Bank lifting the cash rate by 25 basis points for the first time in almost 12 years, small increases were seen for concern around Housing (34%, +2pts) and The Economy (33%, +1pt). Petrol Prices (20%, -1pt) continued the downward trend started in April after peaking at 24% in March. For 19% of Australians (+1pt), the Environment is still sitting as the sixth biggest concern.

We see significant differences in the magnitude of the top six issues in 2022 when compared to those immediately prior to the 2019 federal election, with all the top five issues increasing in concern and Environment decreasing. Crime, ranked fifth in 2019 has dropped out of the top six concerns this year.

## Top issues facing Australia prior to 2022 and 2019 Federal Elections

ISSUE	MAY 2022	MAY 2019	Change	2019 Rank
Cost of Living	52%	34%	+18%	2 ↑
Healthcare	39%	36%	+3%	1 ↓
Housing	34%	22%	+12%	6 ↑
The Economy	33%	24%	+10%	3 ↓
Petrol Prices	20%	8%	+11%	9 ↑
Environment	19%	24%	-4%	4 ↓
Crime (ranked 9, May 2022)	11%	23%	-11%	5 ↓

With the public's mind focused by the start of formal campaigning after the election was called, the gap between the ALP and Coalition as the party *most capable of managing* the majority of these top issues is closing, compared to last month.

The ALP still leads the Coalition on capability of managing Cost of Living (32% vs 28%), Healthcare (32% vs 30%) and Housing (29% vs 28%), while the Coalition has increased its lead on The Economy (36% vs 33%). Compared to May 2019, belief in the ALP's capability to manage the Cost of Living (+5pts), Housing (+3pts) and The Economy (+6pts) has increased, while Healthcare has decreased (-3pts). Belief in the Coalition's capability is reduced from 2019 on Cost of Living (-4pts) and The Economy (-3pts), but on Healthcare and Housing they have had modest gains (+1pt) on the 2019 measures.

Fieldwork for this wave of the Ipsos Issues Monitor was conducted between 4-8 May, about two weeks before the election date, but after distribution of postal vote packs and only days before pre-poll voting opened. The findings above show the ALP has improved its standing on perceived ability to manage the key issues Australians believe face the nation, all of which are seen as being of greater concern than at the last election. While there are many factors which will drive the election outcome, these will no doubt contribute to the decision making of voters.

## April 2022

For the second consecutive month Cost of Living is the issue of greatest concern in April. At 50% (+6pts on March) this is the highest level on this issue since the Ipsos Issues Monitor commenced in 2010. Australians are clearly feeling the growing impact of rising prices recently quantified in the March quarter [consumer price index](#).



The order of the top five issues is consistent with last month. Second and third issues are Healthcare (39%, unchanged) and The Economy (32%, unchanged), followed by Housing (32%, +2pts). Concern over Petrol Prices was slightly reduced (21%, -3pts), following the temporary cut in petrol excise announced in the [March federal budget](#). In sixth place, The Environment remains a concern to one in five people (18%, -5pts).

We are seeing several substantial differences in the top concerns and the perceived capabilities of the two major parties compared to May 2019, prior to the last election. The ALP is now seen as being most capable of managing Cost of Living (issue up 1 place, concern up 16pts\*). Healthcare (-1 places, +3pts) is still seen as being an ALP strength, and The Economy (still #3, +9%\*) is no longer seen as a clear Coalition strength with the gap closing between the two parties. On Housing (+2, +10%\*), the ALP leads with its capability perceived as significantly higher than in 2019 as is the case for Petrol Prices (+12, +13%\*).

The changes in perceived party capability to manage these top issues is reflected in the results of our first two [pre-election polls](#) for the Australian Financial Review.

\*April 2022 significantly different to May 2019

## March 2022

As the Morrison government delivers the final budget of its first term, cost of living becomes our top issue. With more than two in five (44%) selecting cost of living, concern is higher today than at any point in the last decade.



Petrol prices are a key part of this. Almost a quarter (24%) selected petrol prices as a top issue in March – our highest recorded rating and the first time the issue has entered our top five. Beyond the price at the pump, uncertainty about future fuel prices driven by war in Ukraine is almost certainly a factor.

Labor is now seen as the party most capable of managing four of the nation’s top five issues. Labor leads on Cost of Living (+5pts), Healthcare (+6pts), House Prices (6pts), and Petrol Prices (+3pts). The Coalition maintains its traditional lead on the Economy (+3points) – no trivial advantage in uncertain times.

The budget will speak to cost of living concerns and focusing on petrol prices would be wise. With Labor increasingly seen as more capable of managing these issues, it remains to be seen whether Australians will listen.

## February 2022

Covid infections and fatalities keep Healthcare our top issue in February. Falling from a January peak, Healthcare concern is now at the second highest level since April 2020 at the start of the pandemic.



Inflation and interest rate pressures mean Cost of Living concern has grown again this month. Previously the fourth concern at 32%, Cost of Living continued its upward trend and is now in second place at 39%. The other big mover, also hitting a hip-pocket nerve, is Petrol Prices (17%, +5pts).

The Economy (43%, -3pts) and Housing (32%, -1pt) now sit behind cost of living as third, and fourth concerns, followed by the Environment (22%, +1pt).

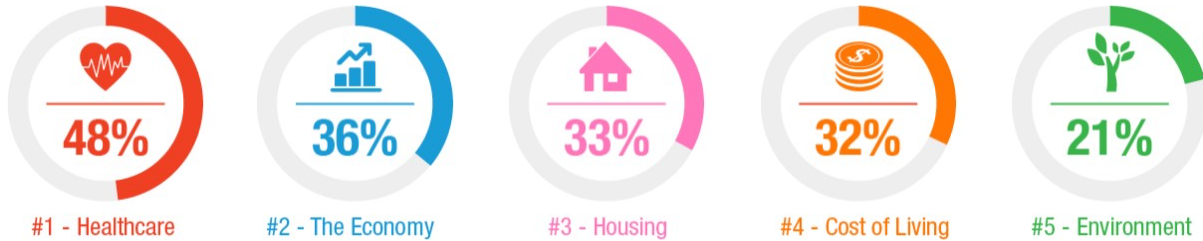
As we head toward a federal election the coalition is seen as most capable of managing Cost of Living (30% vs 29%) and The Economy (36% vs 29%). The ALP is leading on Healthcare (32% vs 28%) and Housing (29% vs 22%). The Greens retain the lead as most capable of managing the Environment (26% vs LNP 22% and ALP 20%).

The gap between the parties, compared to the last election, sees the Coalition closer on Healthcare (2pts), while the ALP is closer on Cost of Living (4pts) and The Economy (8pts). The ALP has extended their lead on Housing (6pts).

As the election approaches, we will draw from our Ipsos Issues Monitor and other Ipsos surveys and polls to track how the parties are seen and which issues are of greatest concern to Australians. At this stage, perceptions are fluid and the result far from certain.

## January 2022

Findings for the first Ipsos Issues Monitor for 2022 are now out. In keeping with the volatility of the most important issues for Australians throughout the pandemic, January 2022 has seen concern over Healthcare rise substantially as the Omicron Covid variant spreads rapidly across most of the country, health systems come under increasing pressure and access to Rapid Antigen Tests remains limited.



Healthcare has been the top issue since April 2021 and in January 2022 sits at 48%, ten points higher than last month, second only to the highest level of concern for Healthcare (55%) observed early in the pandemic in April 2020.

Concern over The Economy remains the issue of second highest concern at 36%, largely unchanged since October 2021.

Housing (33%) and Cost of Living (32%) both continue their upward trend of the past twelve months. This reflects the buoyancy of the housing market, as well as the impact of supply chain issues, and increasing costs in the shadow of rising inflationary pressure.

The 'top five' issues are completed by the Environment at 21%. From being the top issue at an all-time high of 41% in January 2020, concern over the environment waned relative to Healthcare, The Economy and Unemployment over the first six months of the pandemic. This concern then trended upwards to a high of 28% at the time of the UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow in November 2021, and has dropped for the last two months as the Omicron surge has gained speed and Healthcare returned to the top issue.

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