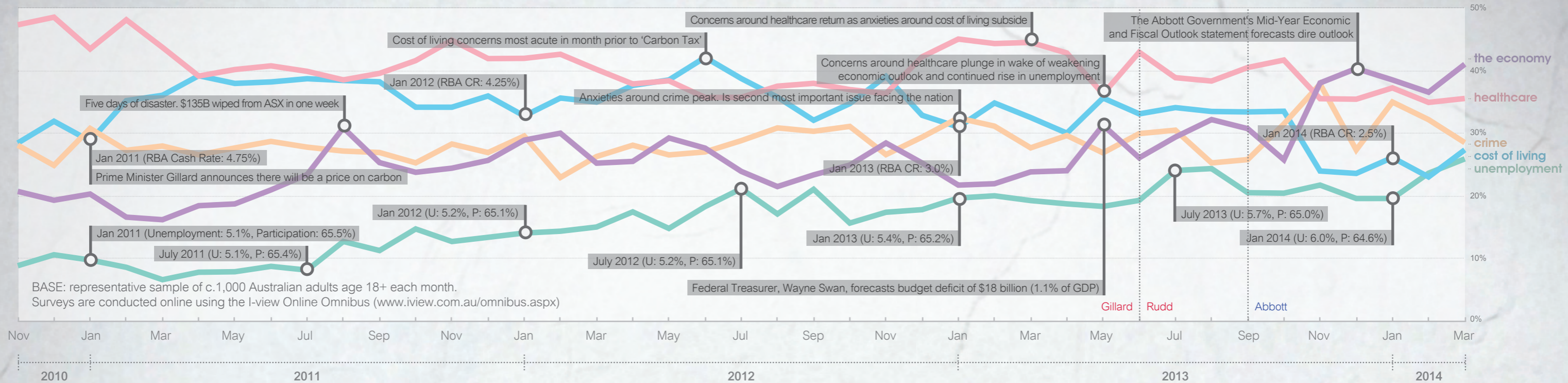


# THE TOP ISSUES FACING AUSTRALIA

## MARCH 2014

What would you say are the three most important issues facing Australia?



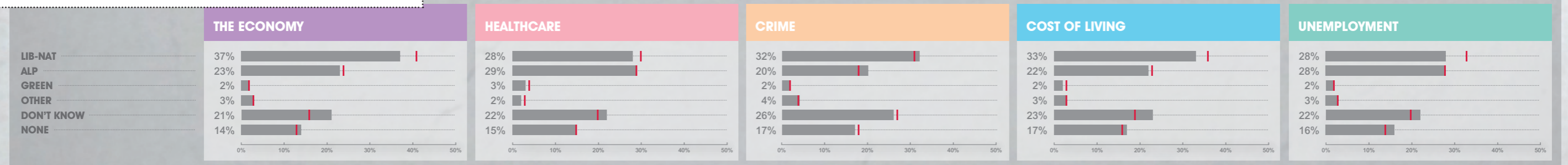
### MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE FOR...



### MOST CAPABLE OF MANAGING...

Please select the political party that you believe is most capable of managing each of the following issues

I = September 2013 Data



### IN SUMMARY



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As the Coalition prepares to deliver its first budget, 'The Economy' continues to be rated by Australians as the most important issue nationally, selected by over two in five (41%) as one of the top three issues facing the nation. 'The Economy' has been the nation's greatest concern since November 2013, and, as such, it is safe to say we are well entrenched in a new paradigm of concern, largely driven by a final and perhaps overdue recognition that the global economy runs in both directions.

If the Coalition is to prepare a budget that forces Australians to really tighten the collective belt, this will be the most likely time in their first term to do so. Subsequent budgets closer to an election will need to reward the voter, but if hard sacrifices are to be made, the time is probably now. However, if the Coalition is to do so, they must be aware of two unique factors.

First off, Australians' concerns about 'The Economy' and 'Unemployment' have never been more acute. Twelve months ago, two out of every ten Australians reported that 'The Economy' was one of the top three issues facing the nation. Concern has since doubled. Similarly, national anxiety around 'Unemployment' has risen, and now sits as the fifth most important issue facing the nation (26% selecting), relative to twelve months ago, when it placed seventh. To this end, it's likely that more Australians will be more engaged, critical and personally invested in this coming budget relative to those in recent memory.

Secondly, the Australian public decisively relayed that the Coalition were more capable to manage 'The Economy' than the ALP all through 2013, peaking at 1.7 times more capable in September. Move forward six months and while Australians are still most likely to cite the Abbott Government as best credentialed to deliver, the proportion who actually feel this way has dropped since the Federal Election. In March of this year, 37% of Australians reported that the Coalition was the political party most capable of managing 'The Economy' compared to 41% in September 2013. Importantly, the ALP does not benefit from this decline, as the proportion who previously selected the Coalition are now choosing 'Don't Know', proving that early policy wins are harder to deliver than promise, and that the ALP is still not credible in this space.

Irrespective of what the Coalition puts forward in May, Australia's political, business and social leaders all carry the responsibility for re-positioning our economic identity beyond mining resources in the north and the west and macro-manufacturing in the east and the south. We do, and can do, so much more. While the responsibility to halt and begin to push against the narrative of economic doom requires many hands, Australia's situation and Abbott's opportunity broadly reflects a quote from Steinbeck's famous novel, The Winter of Discontent "intentions, good or bad, are not enough. There's luck or fate or something else that takes over".

# ALL ISSUES FACING AUSTRALIA

## MARCH 2014

What would you say are the three most important issues facing Australia?

	2010	2011				2012				2013												2014		
	Nov-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
The Economy	20%	18%	19%	27%	25%	28%	27%	23%	26%	22%	22%	24%	24%	31%	26%	29%	32%	31%	26%	38%	40%	39%	37%	41%
Healthcare	48%	45%	40%	39%	43%	42%	37%	37%	39%	45%	44%	44%	43%	36%	43%	39%	38%	40%	42%	36%	35%	37%	35%	36%
Crime	26%	29%	28%	27%	27%	26%	27%	30%	29%	32%	31%	28%	30%	27%	30%	30%	25%	26%	31%	38%	27%	35%	32%	29%
Cost of Living	30%	33%	38%	38%	35%	34%	39%	36%	36%	31%	35%	33%	30%	36%	33%	34%	33%	33%	34%	24%	24%	26%	23%	27%
Unemployment	10%	8%	8%	11%	14%	14%	17%	20%	17%	20%	20%	19%	19%	18%	19%	24%	24%	21%	20%	22%	20%	20%	24%	26%
Immigration	19%	22%	22%	24%	24%	20%	19%	27%	23%	24%	19%	22%	24%	24%	29%	24%	23%	21%	18%	26%	24%	24%	23%	23%
Education	15%	15%	11%	11%	12%	16%	13%	16%	20%	16%	19%	21%	20%	19%	17%	18%	18%	20%	21%	18%	23%	17%	19%	18%
Drug Abuse	13%	13%	12%	11%	11%	11%	11%	12%	12%	13%	13%	11%	12%	11%	12%	11%	10%	10%	11%	16%	15%	21%	18%	18%
Housing	24%	23%	22%	19%	21%	19%	20%	19%	18%	19%	16%	18%	17%	17%	16%	17%	17%	18%	19%	17%	19%	16%	17%	15%
Environment	20%	20%	18%	18%	16%	15%	13%	12%	12%	13%	13%	14%	13%	12%	10%	12%	12%	12%	15%	10%	10%	9%	13%	11%
Petrol Prices	9%	13%	18%	13%	15%	15%	18%	12%	12%	9%	13%	13%	10%	8%	9%	12%	14%	13%	13%	8%	8%	11%	8%	11%
Poverty	10%	9%	9%	9%	11%	9%	9%	11%	10%	11%	9%	11%	12%	12%	10%	11%	10%	11%	10%	10%	11%	8%	12%	9%
Transport	10%	12%	11%	10%	9%	10%	10%	9%	10%	11%	9%	10%	12%	11%	10%	7%	8%	11%	8%	7%	8%	7%	9%	7%
Taxation	6%	6%	7%	9%	7%	8%	9%	7%	7%	7%	7%	6%	7%	8%	5%	5%	7%	7%	5%	5%	6%	6%	5%	6%
Population	10%	9%	9%	8%	8%	8%	7%	7%	6%	7%	7%	6%	6%	9%	6%	7%	7%	6%	8%	7%	9%	7%	7%	6%
Racism	6%	7%	5%	7%	4%	5%	4%	6%	6%	6%	6%	4%	5%	6%	9%	5%	5%	4%	4%	6%	7%	7%	6%	6%
Personal Debt	15%	12%	14%	13%	12%	12%	14%	10%	11%	8%	11%	12%	10%	11%	10%	9%	9%	9%	9%	6%	8%	6%	8%	5%
Defence	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%	3%	3%	4%	4%	3%	3%	2%	4%	3%	3%	2%	3%	4%	4%	4%	3%	3%	2%	5%
Indigenous Issues	4%	3%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	3%	2%	3%	2%	2%	2%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%

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