



Joyce to be re-elected, but National Party supporters are heartbroken

National Party supporters are heartbroken, feeling betrayed and abandoned by their party, but are not angry enough to vote out Barnaby Joyce.

This January survey the Voter Choice Project, a nationwide study into how Australians decide who to vote for, probed voters' thoughts about what the National Party stands for, the Coalition relationship, leadership and the scandals that have plagued the party in the last 12 months. 878 voters participated in the survey, 140 of whom were from New England.

While many city voters were hostile to the party, with similar anger levels as was directed to the Liberals in the December survey, rural voters are sad about the decline of 'their' party.

Project Director and PhD candidate at James Cook University, Raphaella Kathryn Crosby, says the feelings of National Party supporters was more grief than anger, which may explain why they aren't willing to turn their back on the party yet.

"People are clearly distraught, describing their feelings towards the party as being appalled and horrified, and referring to parents turning in their graves," Ms Crosby said.

More than three quarters of respondents felt that Barnaby Joyce's affair and sexual harassment allegations were not handled well by the party; however, many didn't care about the affair, what they didn't like was the cover up, or issues around misuse of power and entitlements.

"Based on the 140 New England participants - which is only indicative not a representative sample - it looks like Barnaby Joyce is on track to a similar win to 2016, with around 50% of first preferences.

"This may shift if a quality independent comes forward, but Nationals in New England and elsewhere aren't willing to give up on their party yet, wanting to rebuild with more women in prominent roles."

Other results from the survey include:

- People generally think there are differences between the Liberal and National parties, and do not want them to merge as they have in Queensland.
- City voters perceive the party to be more conservative or to the right of the Liberals, while many rural voters put the Nationals in line with moderate Liberals, closer to the centre.
- A majority (54%) believe the Liberal Party benefits most from the Coalition arrangements.

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Further results and information on how to take part in the Voter Choice Project are available at www.voterchoice.com.au

How well did the National Party handle these issues?

I'm not sure
 Not well at all
 Could be better
 Reasonably well
 Very well

Barnaby Joyce's affair



Barnaby Joyce's sexual harrasment allegations



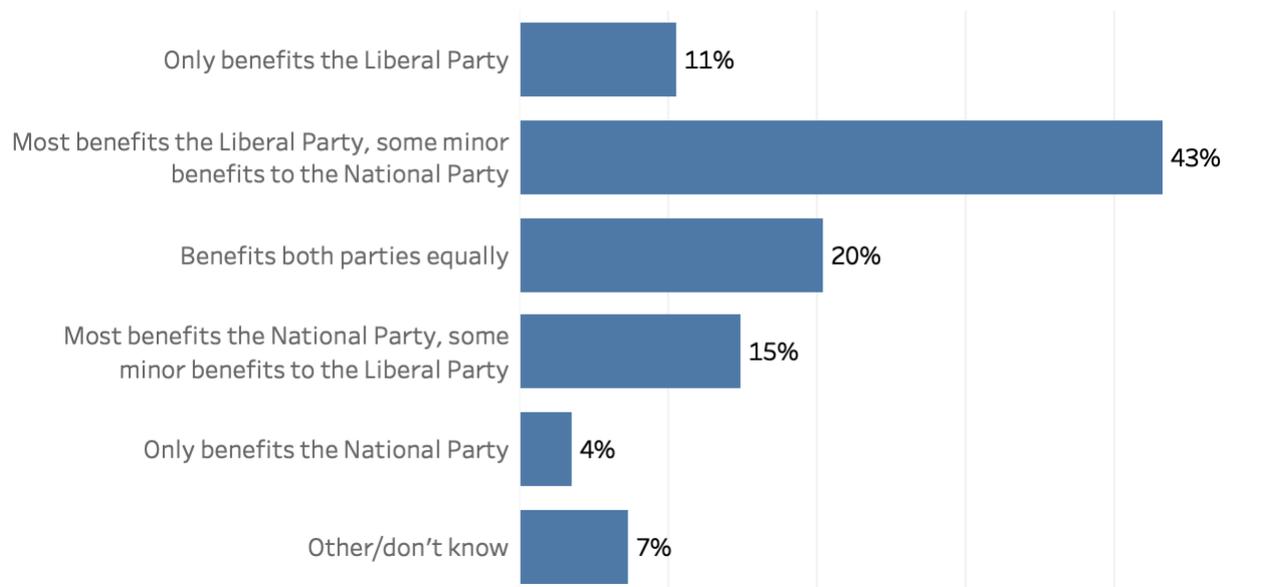
Andrew Broad's 'sugar baby'



George Christensen's travel investigation



Which party benefits from the Coalition



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