

# Omnibus Poll March 2022

# Security

## Methodology

The following tables and graphs are based on a sample which has been selected for voting intention based on the results of the last Newspoll.

Results should be taken as indicative in that the sample is not properly randomised, but it is unlikely that group is completely unrepresentative.

In these tables we have amalgamated the Christian Democrats, Democratic Labor Party, Informed Medical Options Party, Katter Australian Party, Liberal Democrats, One Nation, and the United Australia Party as one and labelled them "Nationalist". This is so that we have a statistically significant sample for this group, and because these parties in our sample attract similar voters, with significantly more having voted Liberal or Liberal National previously than have voted Labor. We have amalgamated the Australian Democrats, Animal Justice Party, Centre Alliance, Sustainable Australia Party and the Western Australian Party as "Others" for similar reasons.

The poll was conducted from March 28, 2022 through to April 3, 2022 using our online panel of over 6,000 Australian voters.

Quantitative analysis was undertaken using Microsoft Excel. Qualitative analysis was undertaken using Leximancer.

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## Executive Summary

Defence has been a theme in this election that has been sporadically enunciated. The Chinese base in the Solomon Islands has been destabilising of the government's campaign, which is worse for them than Labor because my analysis of swinging voters (those who have changed their vote since last election, or from their traditional voting patterns) says it is very important for those now voting Liberal or Nationalist (80% and 75%) but much less so for those voting ALP (35%). As the Coalition are going to rely on preferences from Nationalists, they need to be as credible as possible on this issue.

The Ukrainian War has certainly united Australians on some issues, such as sanctions and sending military aid, although surprisingly the Nationalists are not so keen, perhaps indicating a brand of conservative isolationism here (similar to the US). It has also heightened concerns about our security, which is most pronounced amongst Liberal voters and Nationalists.

The country is pretty united about sanctions on Russia over Ukraine, and also sending military aid. The only group that isn't overly keen is the Nationalists – those minor party voters that Morrison relies on for the preferences to keep him in the game. While overall the country agrees with the sanctions 89% to 6% the Nationalists are split 52% to 31%. Sending weapons was a little less popular overall (75% to 12%), but on this the Nationalists were close to evenly split (43% to 38%) This indicates that there is a version of right-wing isolationism operating in Australian politics, although at a very low level.

The major implication for the election is that the Ukrainian invasion raises the issue of security in the Indo-Pacific. 64% had become more concerned about our security position as a result of the war, with this most pronounced amongst Liberals (83%) and Nationalists (79%). 50% of Labor voters were more concerned as were 41% of Greens. A strong underlying theme, not always expressed explicitly, but often implicitly, was that China might invade Australia. There was also strong support for increasing defence spending, with even Greens voters overwhelmingly wanting defence expenditure maintained.

But this is where it gets messy. Even though voters tending towards the Coalition are keen on defence issues, the Coalition has a bare advantage over the Opposition on the question of who is best for defence. 41% favour the Coalition, but 36% favour Labor. Liberals are most concerned (85%) and Nationalists the next concerned (36%). For Labor voters it is more or less a shrug of the shoulders (27% important versus 23% unimportant), and Greens are desperately uninterested (11% important, 48% unimportant).

There is a variety of reasons why the two parties are judged to be so even by most voters. One is long term strategic, and a view of how you stop wars. The left is more likely to think that you do this via diplomacy, and that their side is better at this. They also think Labor is less likely to get us into a war, and more likely to successfully manage us out. They cite Iraq and Afghanistan as wars the Liberals got us out of???????, as well as Vietnam, and they invoke war time Labor prime ministers as evidence of handling wars they inherited. The right are more likely to think the best defence is through being prepared for war, but here the Liberals run into the problem of the mismanagement of defence procurement over the years – submarine contracts being cancelled and new subs not being available for 30 years – as well as the leasing of the Port of Darwin to Chinese interests. Where they win against Labor is they are seen as more likely to stand up to China (which Labor voters portray as belligerence).

Bottomline is that defence is an important issue for Morrison to maximise the flow of preferences, but he does not have a strong hand to play. One bright light for him is Peter Dutton is seen as breaking the mould of previous ministers, although Dutton is also a polarising figure.

Some more specific points based on the quantitative and qualitative analysis below:

- Support for sanctions on Russia is overwhelming 89% agree to 6% disagree with 71% strongly agreeing. The only significant departure from this is in the Nationalist grouping which is 52% agree to 31% disagree, reflecting a degree of isolationism
- Support for supplying military aid to Ukraine was less strong with 75% agree and 12% disagreeing. Those strongly supporting had dropped from 71% to 50%. The Nationalists were much more evenly split with only 43% supporting and 38% opposing, and here the opposing figures were the most interesting with 31% strongly opposing.
- Ukraine was seen as having security implications for the Indo-Pacific with 64% more concerned than before versus only 1% who were less concerned. Because of the nature of this question the 32% neither concerned nor unconcerned is an important figure because it is unlikely anyone would think our position had improved as a result of this war. On this question it was Liberals and Nationalists most likely to be more concerned (83% and 79% respectively). Labor and Greens voters were fairly nonchalant with 50% and 41% respectively concerned, but 46% and 52% respectively neither concerned nor unconcerned, so alert, but not alarmed.
- There is good support for maintaining or increasing defence spending. A small majority of 52% thought defence spending should be increased, with 31% thinking it should be maintained and only 10% thinking it should be reduced. The “peaceniks” were most apparent amongst Greens voters where 28% wanted a decrease in defence spending versus only 6% who wanted an increase. Even so 67% of Greens wanted defence at least maintained. This trend was also evident, but less so amongst ALP voters with 35% favouring an increase and 15% a decrease, although 79% wanted it maintained or increased. Nationalists were also strongly in favour of increased spending (76% to 5%). Other minor parties were also supportive (45% to 9%) but independents less so (31% to 19%).
- The Coalition is marginally favoured on national security by 41% to the ALP’s 36%. The edge comes from Liberal supporters being overwhelmingly of the view the Coalition is the best (96% to 1% Labor) and the Nationalists being moderately strongly of the same view (69% favouring Coalition to none favouring ALP). However, “Neither” receives strong support from ALP 12%, Greens 30%, Independents 34%, Minor Other 27% and Nationalists 29%. Unsure is also significant amongst ALP (12%), Greens (17%), Independents (28%) and Minor Other Parties (45%).
- Defence is important to 49% of voters, just less than a majority, in this election with only 19% saying it is unimportant. Importance is most heavily concentrated in Liberals (85%) and Nationalists (57%). ALP voters are finely balanced, but not particularly turned-on by the issue (27% important versus 23% unimportant), while Greens are not interested at all (11% to 48%). Independents are more engaged than Labor, but also finely balanced (32% to 35%) and Minor Other Parties moderately engaged (36% to 18%).
- Qualitatively, support for sanctions tends to hang off a sense of justice for Ukraine, but there is also an underlying theme of historical context and the beginnings of WWII, also a concern to avoid direct confrontation and the risk of nuclear war. (All of this shows despite arguments we are more divided than ever that, because a lot of it is based on a shared sense of democratic norms and national sovereignty, we are not as divided as it might sometimes

seem.) It is also sometimes seen as better than physically sending troops, and an alternative to use of force, which many respondents want to avoid at all costs. There was also a sense that the response of the rest of the world is inadequate, so everyone, including us, needs to step-up.

- Opposition to sanctions stems from the idea that they hurt people in the population who have done nothing to cause the problem, and also that Russia has some justification in fearing expansion of NATO, and also that we don't worry about regime change in a number of other countries when it suits us. Also that Ukraine is corrupt and the corrupt US establishment has been meddling there.
- The support for military aid seems to be a consequence of the sense of outrage over Russia's invasion of Ukraine. While it is less than support for sanctions, it is still overwhelming, and it seems to most respondents that to do anything else would not be a proper response.
- When it comes to fears in our region there is concern that Ukraine could be a template for China with Taiwan, but if it ends badly for Russia that might put China's ambitions on hold. Some blame aspects of Western foreign policy. For example, that US ineptitude in Afghanistan might have caused Ukraine. Will similar ineptitude in the future precipitate something in the Indo-Pacific? There is also a view that Australia lacks engagement in our region and has failed to use diplomacy properly. Those neither more nor less concerned about security in our region often seemed to think that the Ukraine War had no flow-through consequences, or that we should be friendly with our neighbours. There were also allegations of hypocrisy and inconsistency in that the Liberals were doing trade deals with China under Abbott, and that the government has cut foreign aid. A minority view is also that China's actions will be separate from anything that happens in Ukraine.
- Opposition to increases in defence spending include that we ought to spend more on diplomacy. There is also general concern with the waste in defence spending as well as lots of opinions on what the money should be spent on compared to what it is at the moment. This is particularly inspired by the asymmetric warfare in the Ukraine. Also concern at our isolation from the rest of war, lack of war preparedness and the futility of competing with the Chinese. Some think we shouldn't invest because the assets will become "stranded assets" because war is changing so quickly.
- Responses to the "Best to handle" question tend to reinforce party preference. Liberals look at how the ALP ran down investment under previous governments, suspect they are too close to China, and criticise their handling of border security. Labor point to the submarine fiasco as an inability to handle defence by Liberals, as well as leasing the Port of Darwin to China. Labor cite WWI and WWII and Vietnam to prove that Labor can handle the country during war and they also see the Coalition as "war mongers". Nationalists worry that Biden has made the world less safe and see border security as reflecting poorly on Labor. They also think the Labor Party is too friendly to the CCP. The US Alliance is also another issue with some respondents seeing a US rescue as our only viable defence strategy, and one independent of who is in power. Labor being in potential partnership with the Greens is a concern for others. Dutton a plus in defence as he is seen by many as a strong pair of hands, unlike his predecessors. Those favouring Labor rely on them being more diplomatic, and with a reputation for being peace-loving and less likely to take us to war. Libs also fare poorly from their defence procurement debacles, particularly the submarines.

## Quantitative Analysis

How strongly do you support or oppose Australia imposing sanctions on Russia over its invasion of Ukraine?

	ALP	Grns	Ind	LP	Minor_Other	Nationalist	Total
<b>Strongly support</b>	72%	57%	61%	84%	82%	33%	71%
<b>Support</b>	19%	31%	15%	13%	18%	19%	18%
<b>Neither support nor oppose</b>	6%	6%	9%	3%	0%	12%	5%
<b>Oppose</b>	2%	4%	3%	1%	0%	7%	2%
<b>Strongly oppose</b>	2%	2%	12%	0%	0%	24%	3%
<b>Unsure</b>	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	5%	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Total agree</b>	90%	89%	76%	96%	100%	52%	89%
<b>Total disagree</b>	4%	6%	15%	1%	0%	31%	6%
<b>Net agree</b>	<b>87%</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>83%</b>

n=542

How strongly do you support or oppose Australia supplying military aid to Ukraine?

	ALP	Grns	Ind	LP	Minor_Other	Nationalist	Total
<b>Strongly support</b>	47%	35%	36%	65%	55%	26%	50%
<b>Support</b>	29%	30%	27%	22%	18%	17%	25%
<b>Neither support nor oppose</b>	11%	15%	12%	7%	27%	17%	11%
<b>Oppose</b>	7%	6%	9%	5%	0%	7%	6%
<b>Strongly oppose</b>	5%	11%	12%	1%	0%	31%	7%
<b>Unsure</b>	3%	4%	3%	1%	0%	2%	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Total agree</b>	76%	65%	64%	87%	73%	43%	75%
<b>Total disagree</b>	12%	17%	21%	6%	0%	38%	12%
<b>Net agree</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>63%</b>

n=542

Does the war in Ukraine make you more or less concerned about the security position of Australia in the Indo-Pacific?

Row Labels	ALP	Grns	Ind	LP	Minor_Other	Nationalist	Total
<b>Much more concerned</b>	15%	6%	18%	36%	9%	38%	23%
<b>More concerned</b>	35%	35%	39%	48%	64%	40%	41%
<b>Neither concerned nor unconcerned</b>	46%	52%	33%	15%	27%	17%	32%
<b>Less concerned</b>	1%	4%	3%	1%	0%	0%	1%
<b>Much less concerned</b>	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
<b>Unsure</b>	3%	4%	6%	1%	0%	5%	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Total more concerned</b>	50%	41%	58%	83%	73%	79%	64%
<b>Total less concerned</b>	1%	4%	3%	1%	0%	0%	1%
<b>Net more concerned</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>63%</b>

n=542

Australia currently spends around 2.2% of its budget on defence. Should this figure be increased or decreased?

Row Labels	ALP	Grns	Ind	LP	Minor_Other	Nationalist	Total
<b>Significantly increased</b>	7%	0%	6%	36%	0%	29%	18%
<b>Increased</b>	28%	6%	25%	48%	45%	46%	34%
<b>Neither increased nor decreased</b>	44%	61%	38%	13%	9%	7%	31%
<b>Decreased</b>	10%	20%	19%	0%	9%	0%	7%
<b>Significantly decreased</b>	5%	7%	0%	0%	0%	5%	3%
<b>Unsure</b>	7%	6%	13%	4%	36%	12%	7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Total Increased</b>	35%	6%	31%	83%	45%	76%	52%
<b>Total Decreased</b>	15%	28%	19%	0%	9%	5%	10%
<b>Net Increased</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>-22%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>42%</b>

n=542

Which of the Coalition or Labor do you think is best to handle Australia's national security?

	ALP	Grns	Ind	LP	Minor_Other	Nationalist	Total
ALP	75%	54%	28%	1%	27%	0%	36%
Coalition	1%	0%	9%	96%	0%	69%	41%
Neither	12%	30%	34%	1%	27%	29%	13%
Unsure	12%	17%	28%	3%	45%	2%	10%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

n=542

How important or unimportant will defence be to you in deciding your vote at the next election?

	ALP	Grns	Ind	LP	Minor_Other	Nationalist	Total
Very important	6%	2%	13%	45%	0%	24%	21%
Important	21%	9%	19%	40%	36%	33%	28%
Neither important nor unimportant	50%	41%	32%	12%	45%	17%	32%
Unimportant	17%	26%	23%	2%	18%	17%	13%
Very unimportant	6%	22%	13%	1%	0%	7%	6%
Unsure	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	2%	1%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Total important	27%	11%	32%	85%	36%	57%	49%
Total unimportant	23%	48%	35%	2%	18%	24%	19%
Net important	4%	-37%	-3%	83%	18%	33%	30%

n=542

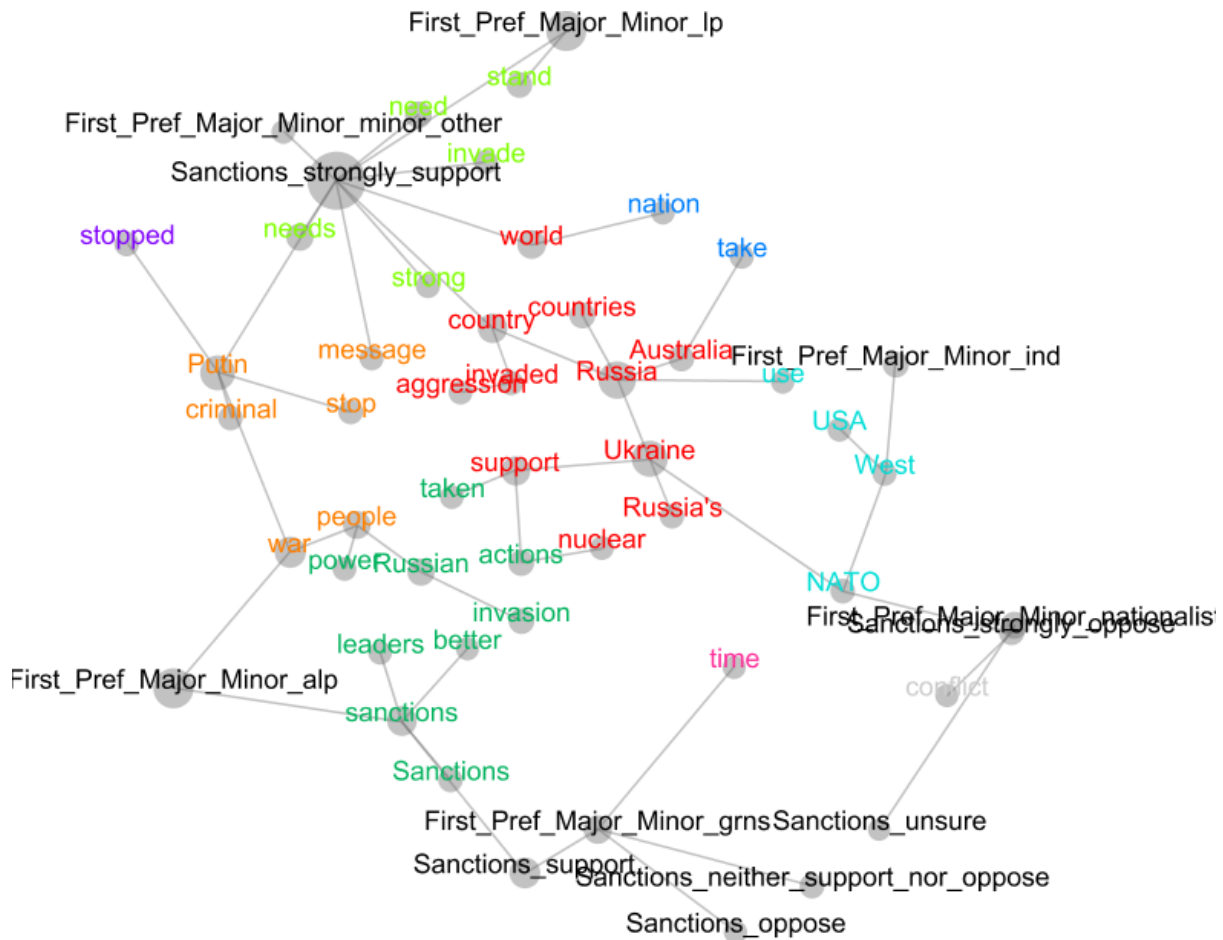


## Qualitative Analysis

Our qualitative analysis looks at the reasons given by respondents for their various judgements. The following maps are generated from the data by Leximancer and overlay the key words over the variables from the question – generally the answer to the question plus voting intentions. Words that are most closely associated will cluster together. The most frequently used words are brighter than those used less frequently.

We do not edit the verbatims and all spelling and grammatical errors are reproduced. Editing the transcripts would take away from some of the unique tone of each response. The verbatims are selected so as to give a better insight into how the individual words are being used.

How strongly do you support or oppose Australia imposing sanctions on Russia over its invasion of Ukraine?



Verbatims

*I am an expert with a deep knowledge of the history of all the "Russian lands" (Rus' - including today's Russia, Ukraine and Belarus), as well as the Russian language and Russian literature (which includes some Ukrainians such as Nikolai Gogol). Quite apart from the long history, the present conflict between Russia and Ukraine is the fault of the US neocons and "manifest destiny" clique who decided after the fall of communism that Russia had to be a permanent enemy, and who persuaded NATO to enlarge (now by 14 countries), putting bases all around Russia's western periphery.*

*Russia's leader Putin needs to get a clear message that his war crimes in Ukraine and his tsarist ambitions earn him the international opprobrium he deserves. The scope and range of the actions being taken should be supported by all nations that support democracy and decency instead of meeting war with a potential global war.*

*Frankly, I would like to see further/stronger sanctions but accept that it's probably better if we act in accordance with stronger nations. While I consider all wars to be bad, Russia's war of aggression is significantly different from the various proxy wars and regional conflicts of recent and current times and a strong*

*message needs to be sent from the international community that these actions will not be tolerated.*

*A few years ago Ukraine was declared the most corrupt country in the West, Levensky banned 11 opposition (non pro-Russian) parties, banned the speaking of Russian in Ukraine and massively repressed their Russian speaking minority inc massively stepping up the shelling of the Donbas this year. For years Putin has been pleading with NATO and EU to ley Ukraine be neutral.*

*Unfortunately we do not seem to have any other means of persuading Russia to pull out and stop its invasion of Ukraine. I support the Ukraine in fighting for its independence from Russia and am terribly shocked at what has happened; but I also understand a Russian desire to protect its flanks from encroachment by Nato and therefore US-aligned forces.*

*Sanctions have significant repercussions and impact in these times, and have to be a substitute for physical war when dealing with mad people with nuclear weapons. Crippling the Russian economy and imposing sanctions on Russian companies and people are the best way to minimise power and future possibilities of war.*

*The war on Ukraine reminds me too much of how Hitler was able to start WWII. Chamberlain, the UK Prime Minister at the time wanted peace talks and appeased Hitler by ceding parts of Czechoslovakia and only because of the strong leadership of Churchill, with the support of the US, Australia is now a free country.*

*Putin is a murderous butcher and criminal and he is in power with the support of the many corrupt oligarchs who have criminally taken advantage of the Russian people since Glasnost. They all deserve to be severely punished for their crimes.*

How strongly do you support or oppose Australia supplying military aid to Ukraine?



### Verbatims

*Unless we continue to support Ukraine with military aid, Russia will capitalise on our weakness. I am not sure which way this war is going to go but we totally need to cripple Russia economically (so everyday Russians) so it can't afford the war*

*I think that supplying military support to enable Ukraine to defend itself is an appropriate action. We have strong ties with Europe and many immigrants from Ukraine, Russia and surrounding nations so we need to act in such a way that this war can be contained if possible*

*It is a fight centred on the Eastern Ukraine where ethnic Russians and far-right elements (aka the Azov Battalions ) have been fighting for a long time. One side (who knows which?) used a Russian missile to shoot down a civilian aircraft with innocent children aboard.*

*The people of Ukraine have shown great courage and determination in resisting Vladimir Putin and his Russians, they need as much support as they can get - including military intervention.*

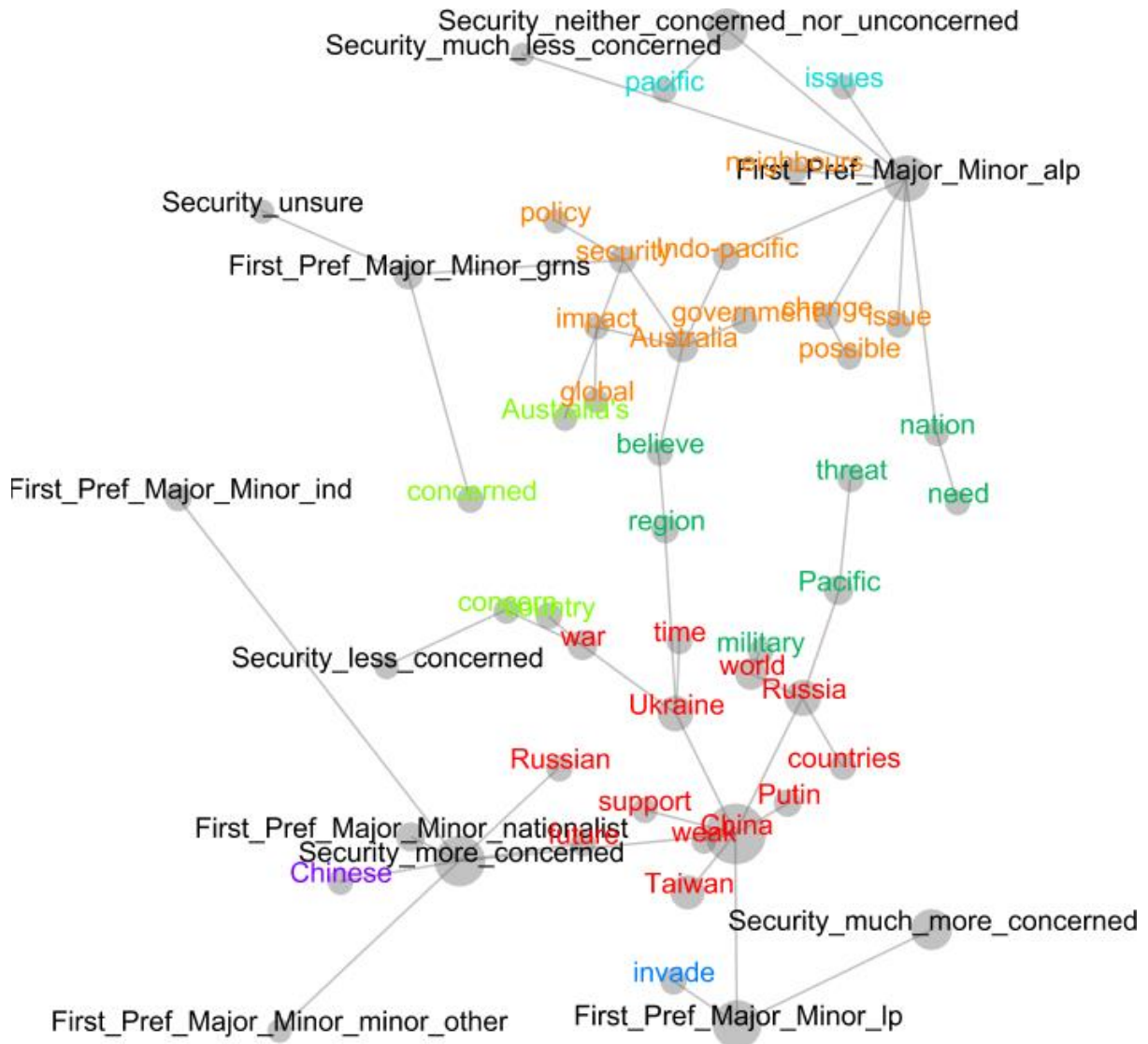
*Short of placing ADF or NATO feet on the ground, which could escalate hostilities, the world should back Ukraine in any way possible, including weapons' and training to defend themselves against the aggressors.*

*Russia has invaded Ukraine similarly to the way the Nazis invaded Poland. Russia must now face the fact that it could be annihilated with Nuclear weapons if it doesn't remove itself from Ukraine and get rid of Putin a war Criminal.*

*It will help the Ukrainians defend their country and given the ineptitude and inadequacy of the Russian military will help defeat their intentions and result in pressure for a regime change.*

*While the neo liberal efforts to get the World Bank and IMF loans into Ukraine, and the advances of NATO towards Russia are largely to blame for Putin's paranoid and greater Russia ideas, his invasion is totally unacceptable.*

Does the war in Ukraine make you more or less concerned about the security position of Australia in the Indo-Pacific?



*Verbatims*

*What really concerns me is the ineptitude of the current government in managing our foreign policy, and putting our Pacific neighbours offside, whilst embroiling us too deeply in an alliance with the US, instead of maintaining a more independent stance. It does not help that all this is occurring at the same time that in Russia and China, two tyrants who rule with iron gloves have dominance, one struggling to increase its power in Europe, the other increasing its power in the South Pacific and heading for world domination, one suspects.*

*Russia and Ukraine are not immediately affecting us but, looking further down the track with China and North Korea, I find them to be a real concern. North Korea is commanded by a maniac and could do anything at any time whereas China could invade Taiwan which would really put a rat amongst the pigeons.*

*I do not support what Putin has done, but the west has been shown to be weak and has made some very stupid decisions regarding fuel security. Countries such as China will be watching a thinking it could be time to move on Taiwan, also China is in the process of negotiating an agreement with the Solomon Islands regarding a military base or port.*

*The issue of Ukraine is unlikely to spill over into our region unless the Peoples Republic of China becomes more assertive in the occupation of land in the Western Pacific and the China Seas. If the politburo sees the rest of the world as being weak and ineffective then there exists the possibility that the PRC will not hesitate to occupy lands that are currently part of another country.*

*Although I do not support Western intervention in Ukraine, I do see that the indecisive vacillation by the West, and bumbling incompetence of Biden and his fool VP Kamala Harris, project WEAKNESS and lack of will by the West - a lesson which will not be lost of China's Xi, who (unlike Putin) DOES aspire for China to be a world hegemon.*

*I think the American empire is losing power, and the authoritarian regimes in China and India and Russia and other countries pose a security threat in Asia and Pacific, exacerbated by climate crisis*

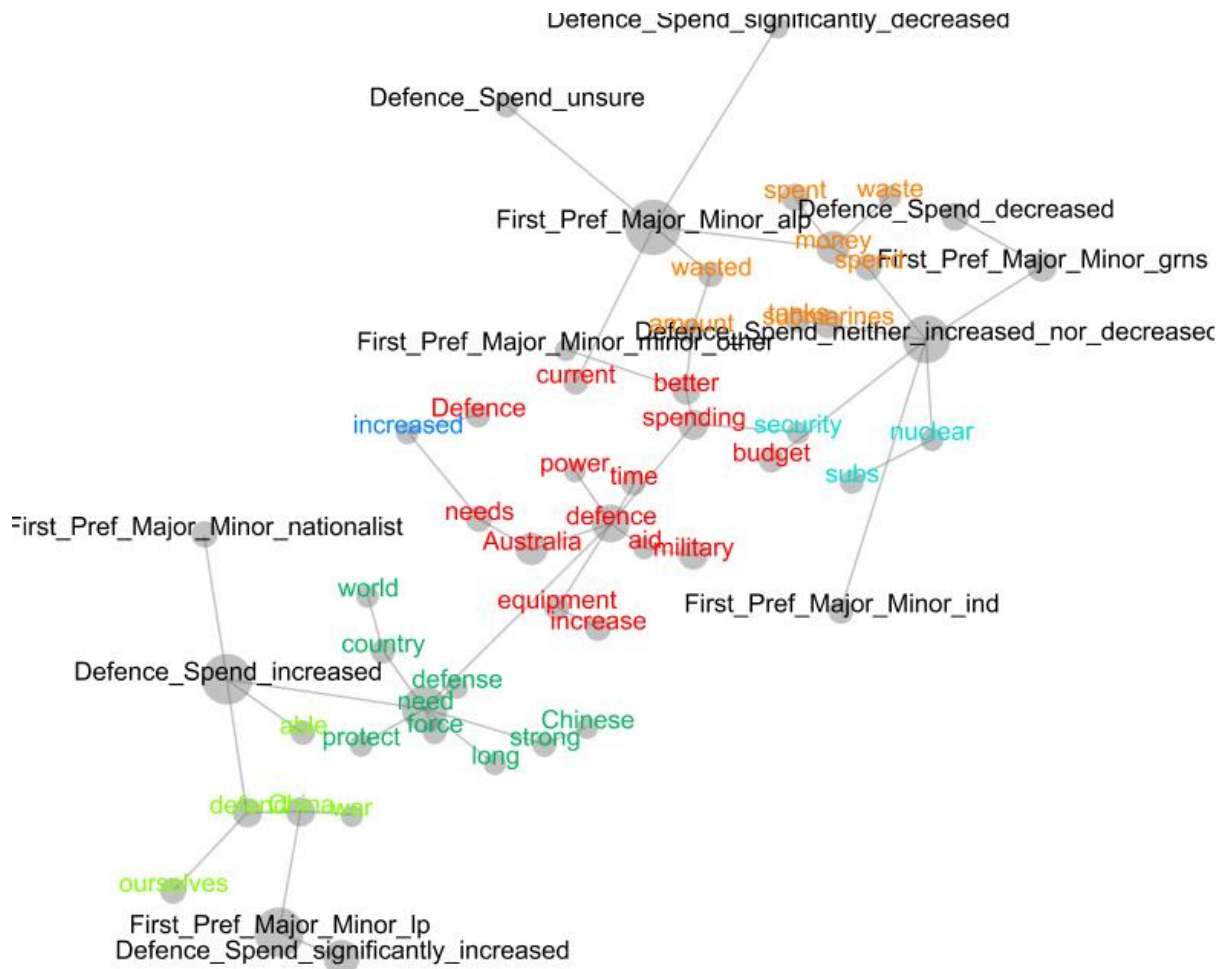
*Russia and China's relationship is akin to the axis powers in the second world war. Russia is fast becoming a vassal state of China which likewise has expansionist ambitions in the Indo Pacific region in conjunction with its global ambitions.*

*The idea that Australia is a big player on the international stage is stupid - Australia's support for Ukraine could well have consequences with other regional players who are prepared to look dispassionately at the Russian side. (but no here we go following the US part of the new world order and great reset perhaps?)*

*By not even telling their allies of the withdrawal and by making the Taliban potentially the best equipped army in the world (outside the US, Russia and China), Biden effectively emboldened Putin but, more disconcertingly, Xi. Taiwan now becomes the biggest issue for Australia (and the world) because if they are attacked, military issues are magnified massively - but equally, 90% of the world's advanced chips are suddenly threatened which brings down the world economy!*

*The world has one to a very dangerous place pandemic, climate change and no the very real threat of a Third World War. I also believe the current federal government has contributed to this with its inability to recognise the need to build close, strong relationships with our Pacific neighbours and its huge cuts to international aid .*

Australia currently spends around 2.2% of its budget on defence. Should this figure be increased or decreased?



Verbatims

*We need to be spend better, more sensibly, rather than spend mire. The massive amount of wasted money in defence procurement means spending more money isn t going to guarantee better defence or a more secure environment for Australia*

*We need to be spending much more on diplomacy and aid if we are to build the peace that we need in the world. Expanding military hardware does little more than increase tensions, unless it is clearly oriented to the immediate defence of Australia, which current military expansion is not.*

*We have wasted Billions on botched submarine deals and other items, but I feel we are still very exposed to some type of takeover. I remember when Howard reduced the Defence force down to an amount that would fit in the Waca ground and all this time later we still do not have enough personnel to protect Australia in my opinion.*

*It is hard to think of an arms race that has ended well. Rather than proposing to spend more than \$80 billion on nuclear submarines, we should be using aid*



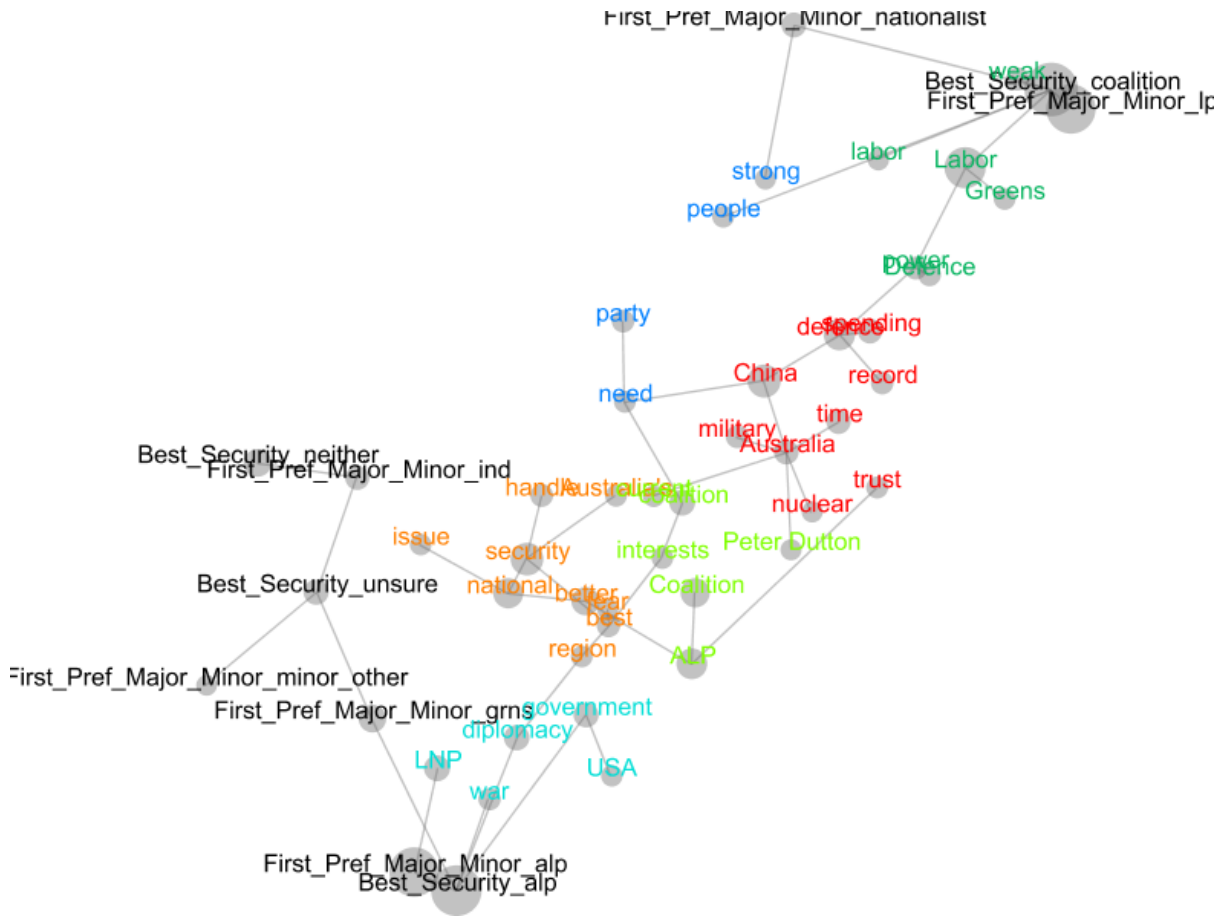
*finance to build strong relationships with our neighbours and eliminate the sort of tension that could cause military conflict.*

*Australia has failed to build its defences properly givne the Chna threats. Now that there are Pacific Islands making alliances with China using China money and whinging about how the sea levels are rising up and blaming us we need to build strong defences.*

*We need to be prepared for war at all times. We need to be able to defend ourselves indefinitely until we are victorious or long enough until help arrives from our allies.*

*We are in a vulnerable position as an island country and now that the Solomon Islands are singing up with China I think that we definitily need to protect ourselves more.*

Which of the Coalition or Labor do you think is best to handle Australia's national security?



## Verbatims

*Australia's security will be best ensured through shrewd diplomacy and efficient and smart use of our military resources for defence. The LNP coalition lacks the cultural, historical or political understanding, or the principles, to cultivate balanced and positive relationships with the powers in our region, as demonstrated by their hypocrisy on China (leasing and sale of land and infrastructure to Chinese interests while stoking fear and mistrust for domestic political gain).*

*Labor ran down the ADF last time in power and when we went into Timor we could only call on 3 1/2 battalions. since the Coalition has come into Government the ADF has 7 battalions and much more military kit to defend Australia. With the Greens saying the current Defence spending should be halved this says it all to me.*

*Currently the coalition seem to be trying to start a conflict with China , every news bulletin has one of the Liberals making inflammatory commentary about them , I hardly call that handling national security well , we need a government that has more idea of diplomacy .*

*Labor has agreed to increase Defence funding if they win government. The govt has ordered nuclear subs at huge cost but they will be out of date by the time Australia gets them, and the costs the Govt will have to pay France for cancelled submarine deal will be in the billions.*

*I am hopeful the ALP with Penny Wong will be able to demonstrate a much better leadership and international diplomacy. Whether there is time to rebuild damaged international relations with Pacific neighbours and China that will benefit Australia and reduce the current threats remains to be seen.*

*Sabre rattling is for desperate conservatives particularly around election time to stir up nationalistic fervour. Using diplomacy and engagement with countries such as China and improving at home security are more attuned to our capacity and capability.*

*Our national security is better served with string diplomacy rather than bellicose sable rattling as witnessed from the defence minister and prime minister.*

*Labor has a history of not knowing what needs to be done with Defence. If Labor go into coalition with Greens we will see less spending on defence.*

*The last time ALP was in power in Canberra they decreased the defence spend. I cannot see the ALP having ever taken the step of obtaining nuclear powered submarines for our defence forces*

*The only military involvement by Australia which could be described as a success was the first Gulf War when Hawke and the ALP were in charge. The argument that the Coalition has an advantage in national security is a total absurdity.*