

Polling - NSW voluntary assisted dying

July 2021

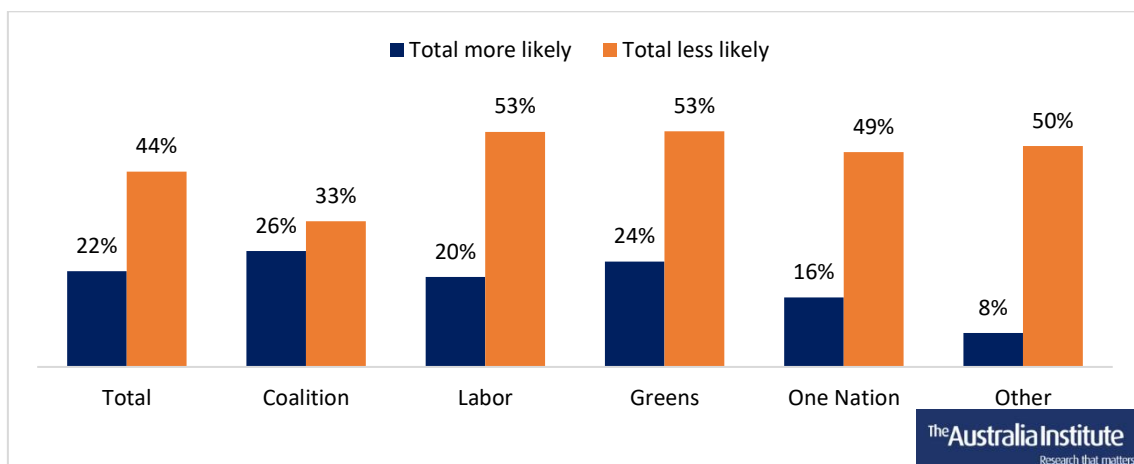
Key results

The Australia Institute surveyed a representative sample of 1,008 people in New South Wales about their views on voluntary assisted dying (VAD), also known as voluntary euthanasia.

The results show high support for legalising voluntary assisted dying in NSW, and for treating the vote on VAD legislation as a matter of personal conscience rather than a matter of party policy.

- Seven in ten (70%) Coalition voters think VAD should be legal, with 15% disagreeing.
- Two in three (65%) people in NSW think the vote on voluntary assisted dying should be treated as a matter of personal conscience, with 14% thinking it should be a matter of party policy.
- 44% of voters would be *less* likely to vote for the Liberal Party if they did not allow a conscience vote on voluntary assisted dying legislation, with 22% saying they would be *more* likely to do so.
- One in three (33%) Coalition voters would be *less* likely to vote for the Liberal Party if they did not allow a conscience vote on voluntary assisted dying legislation.

Figure 1: If the Liberal Party did not allow their MPs a conscience vote on VAD would you be more or less likely to vote for them at the next NSW state election?



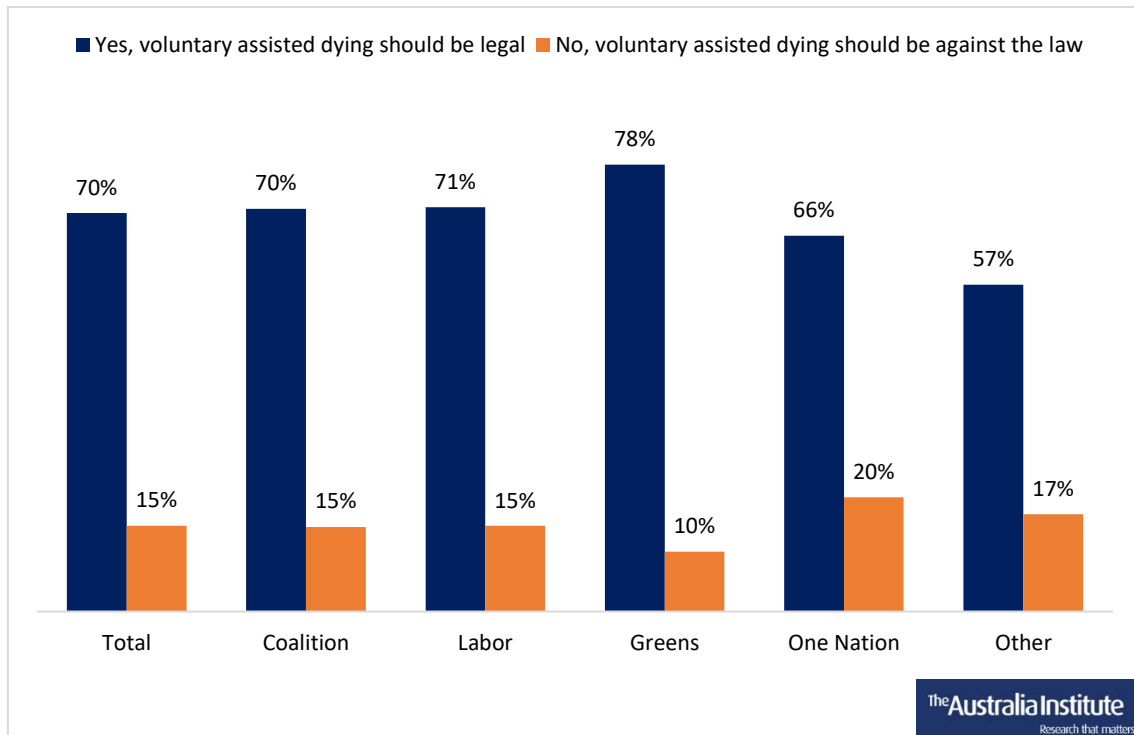
Support for voluntary assisted dying

Respondents were asked the following question: “If someone with a terminal illness who is experiencing unrelievable suffering asks to die, should a doctor be allowed to assist them to die?”

The results show strong support for voluntary assisted dying:

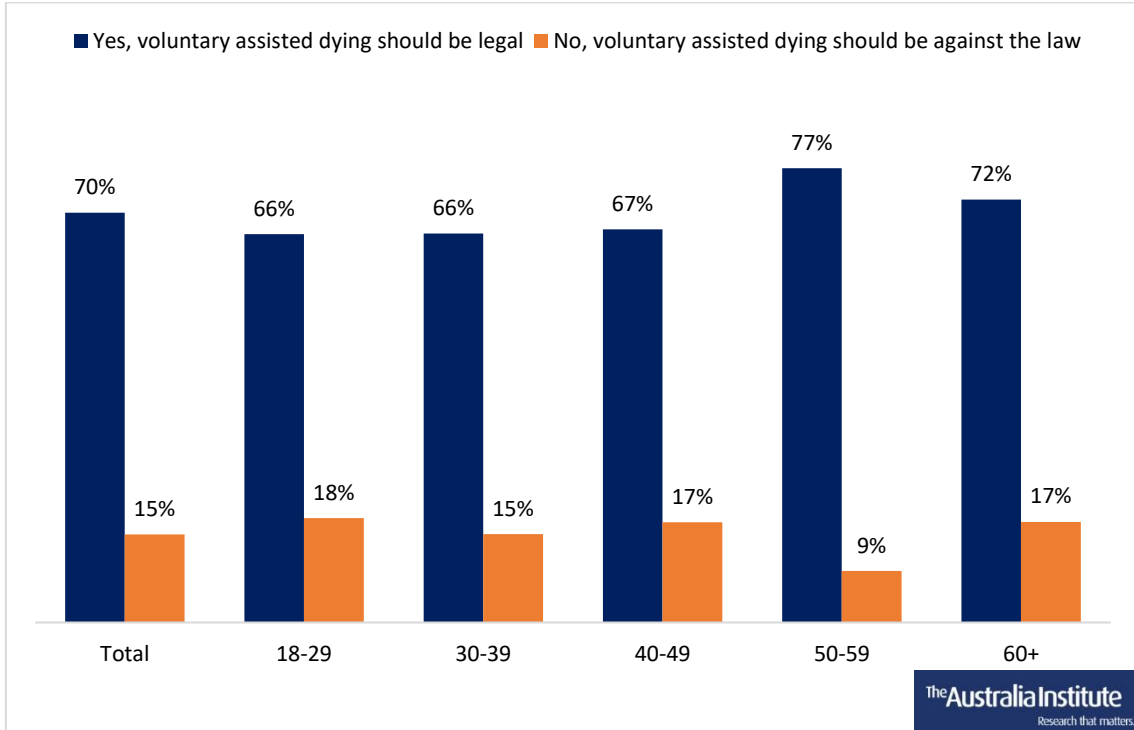
- Seven in ten (70%) NSW voters think that voluntary assisted dying should be legal, with 15% thinking it should remain against the law.
- Seven in ten (70%) Coalition voters think VAD should be legal, with 15% disagreeing.
- Across all voting intentions a majority of voters believe voluntary assisted dying should be legal, including Labor (71%), Greens (78%), One Nation (66%) and Other voters (57%).

Figure 2: Support for voluntary assisted dying to be legal, by voting intention



A majority of voters in all age groups think that voluntary assisted dying should be legal, with support ranging from 66% to 77%.

Figure 3: Support for voluntary assisted dying to be legal, by age group



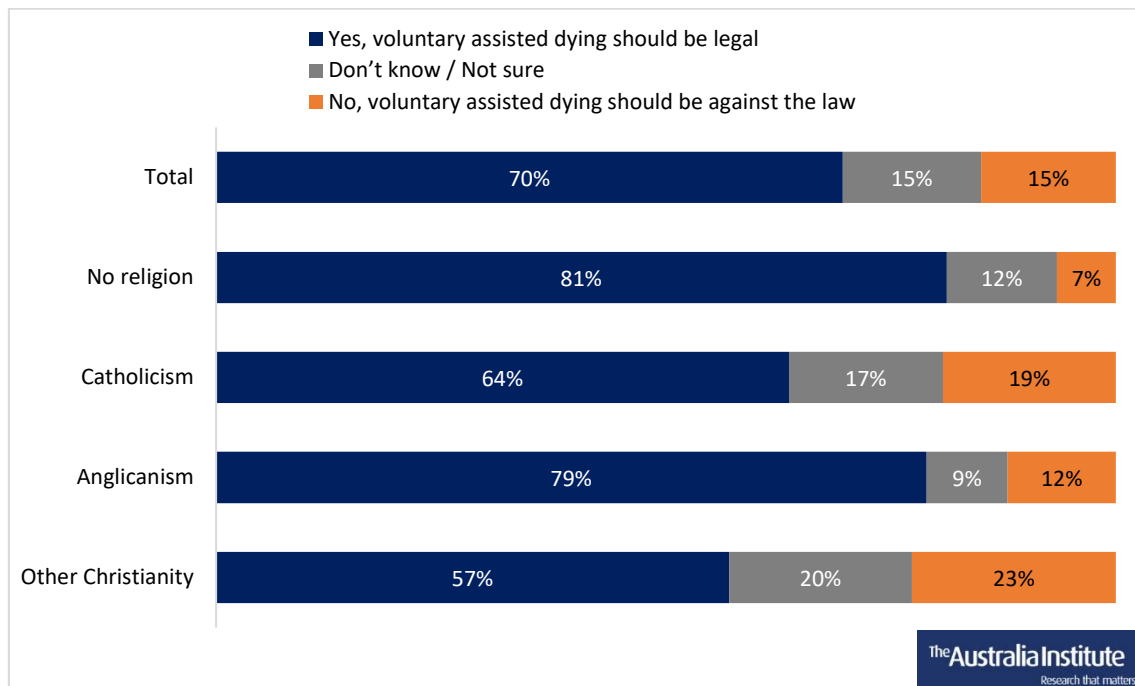
The Australia Institute also surveyed respondents on their religious affiliation. The distribution of religious affiliation among respondents is similar to the distribution for NSW in the most recent Census (2016).¹

The four largest religious affiliations in NSW are no religion, Catholicism, Anglicanism and other Christianity. A majority of voters in all four of the largest religious groups support voluntary assisted dying being legalised.

- Two in three (64%) Catholics in NSW support legalising voluntary assisted dying, with 19% opposing it.
- Four in five (79%) Anglicans in NSW support legalising voluntary assisted dying, about as many as those of no religion who support it (81%).
- Among the four largest religious groups, other Christianity had the lowest support for legalising voluntary assisted dying. However, even among this group three in five (57%) support legalisation compared to 23% opposed.

Only religions that recorded above 100 respondents in the poll have been included. The sample size for other religious affiliations (Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, other religion and prefer not to say) was too small to report meaningful results.

Figure 4: Support for voluntary assisted dying to be legal, by selected religious affiliation



¹ Multicultural NSW (n.d.) *New South Wales – Religion*, <https://multiculturalnsw.id.com.au/multiculturalnsw/lga-religion>

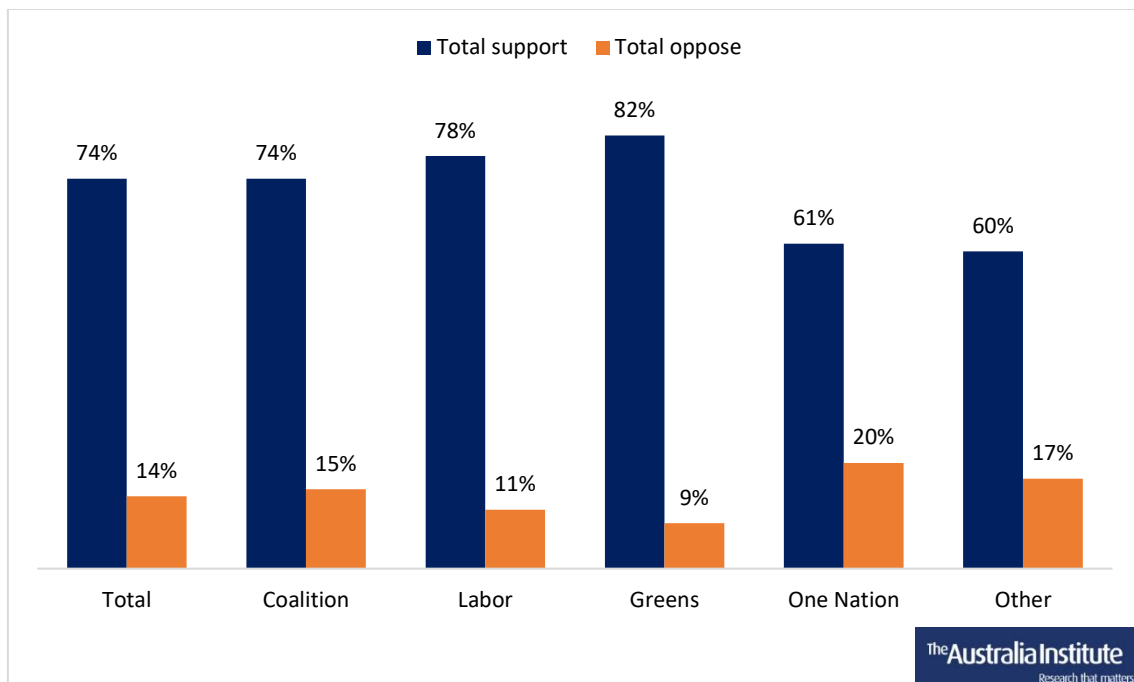
Legalising voluntary assisted dying in New South Wales

Respondents were asked whether NSW should pass laws to legalise voluntary assisted dying similar to those that have passed in Victoria, Tasmania, Western Australia, and South Australia.

The results show:

- Three in four (74%) NSW voters support NSW passing laws to legalise voluntary assisted dying, with 14% opposing the idea.
- Three in four (74%) Coalition voters support NSW passing laws to legalise voluntary assisted dying, with 15% opposing the idea.
- A majority of voters across all voting intentions support NSW passing laws to legalise voluntary assisted dying, including 78% of Labor, 82% of Greens, 61% of One Nation and 60% of Other/Independent voters.

Figure 5: Support for NSW to pass laws legalising voluntary assisted dying, by voting intention



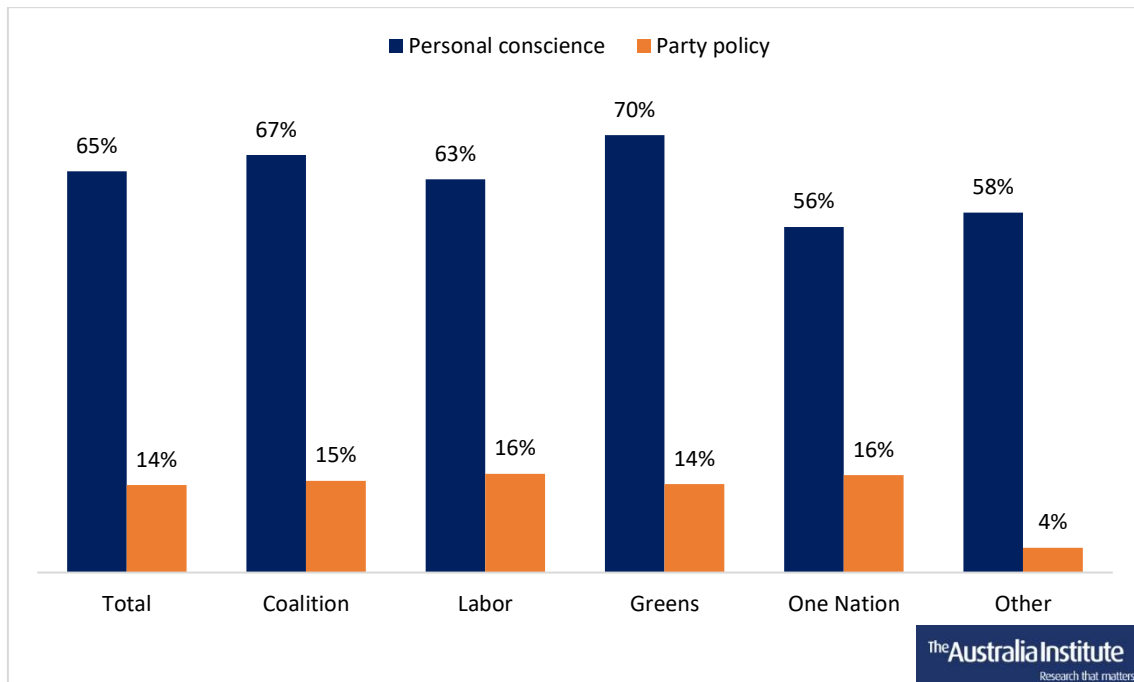
Legalising VAD: Conscience votes or party line?

In Parliament, the term ‘conscience vote’ describes votes on moral and social issues where parliamentarians may use their personal conscience to vote and are not obliged to vote along party lines.

Respondents were asked whether political parties should handle the issue of voluntary assisted dying legislation as a matter of party policy, or as a matter of personal conscience.

- Two in three (65%) people in NSW think voluntary assisted dying should be treated as a matter of personal conscience, with 14% thinking it should be a matter of party policy.
- A majority of voters across all voting intentions support treating voluntary assisted dying as a matter of personal conscience, including 67% of Coalition, 63% of Labor, 70% of Greens, 56% of One Nation and 58% of Other/Independent voters.

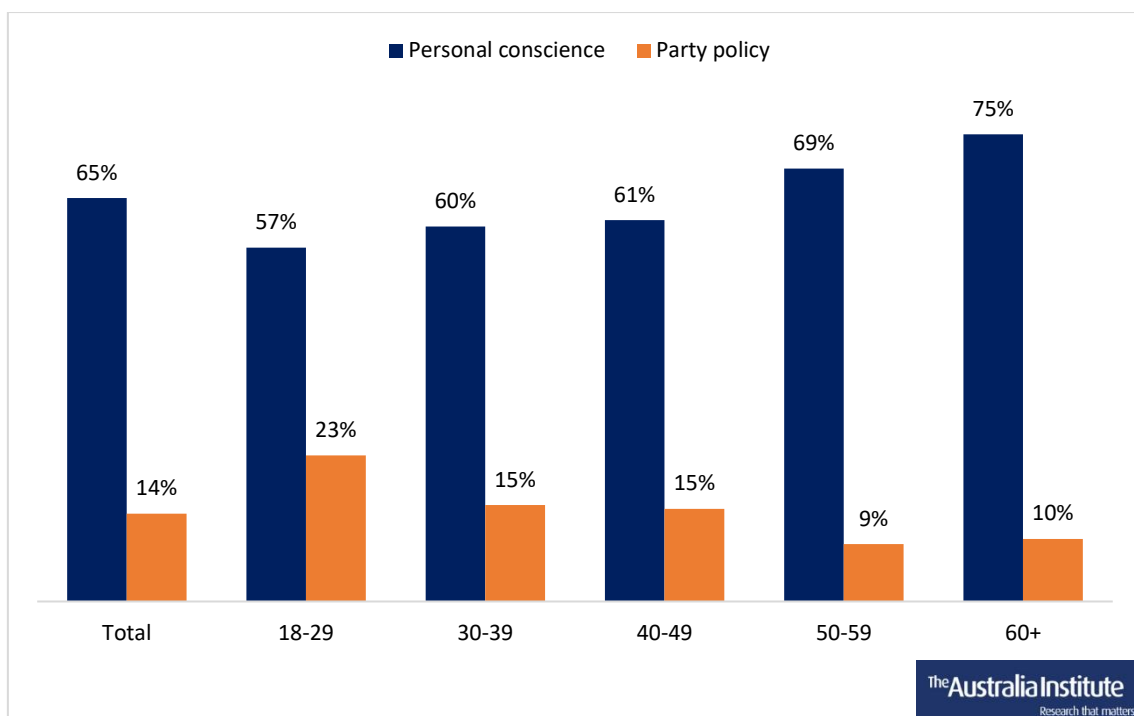
Figure 6: How political parties in NSW should treat the issue of voluntary assisted dying legislation, by voting intention



A majority of people across all age groups also support treating voluntary assisted dying legislation as a matter of personal conscience, with support increasing with age. Similarly, support for treating VAD as a matter of party policy also decreases as age increases.

- Support for treating voluntary assisted dying legislation as a matter of personal conscience was highest amongst people aged 60 and older (75%) with 10% thinking VAD should be a matter of party policy.
- Support for treating voluntary assisted dying legislation as a matter of personal conscience was lowest amongst people aged 18-29 (57%) with 23% thinking VAD should be a matter of party policy.

Figure 7: How political parties in NSW should treat the issue of voluntary assisted dying legislation, by age group



The Liberal Party and conscience votes

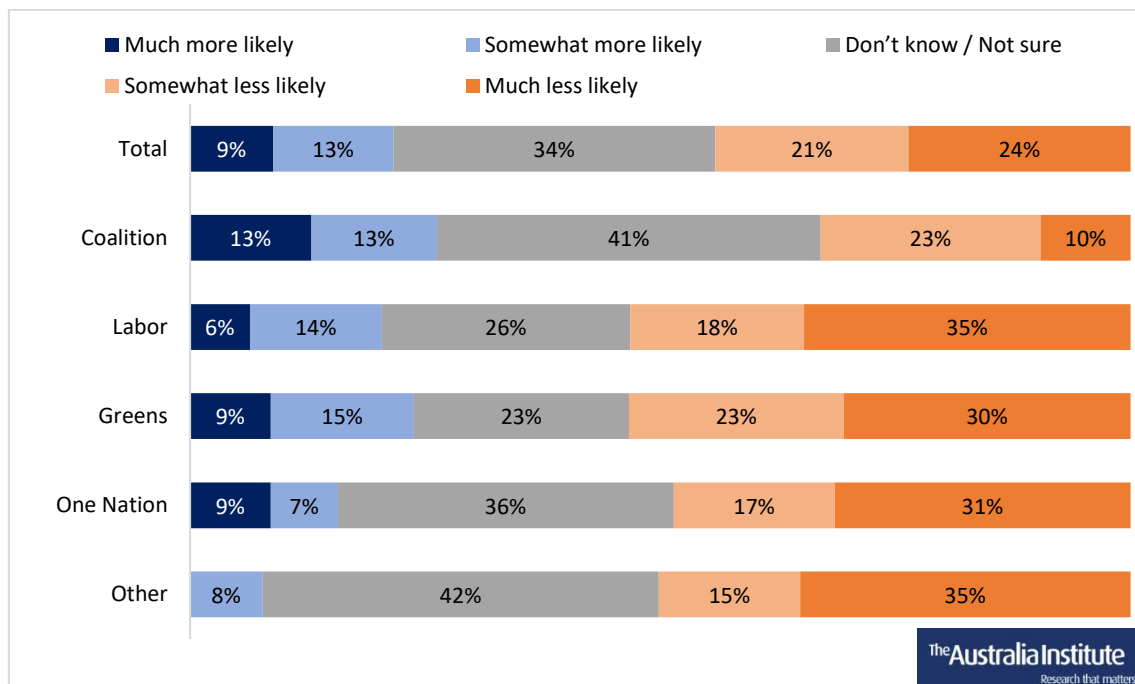
A proposal to legalise voluntary assisted dying will be presented to the NSW Parliament soon.

Currently, the National Party and the Labor Party are planning on allowing their parliamentarians a conscience vote on voluntary assisted dying.

Respondents were asked if they would be more or less likely to vote for the Liberal Party at the next NSW state election if the Liberal Party did not allow their parliamentarians a conscience vote on voluntary assisted dying legislation.

- 44% of voters would be *less* likely to vote for the Liberal Party if they did not allow a conscience vote on voluntary assisted dying legislation, with 22% saying they would be *more* likely to do so.
- One in three (33%) Coalition voters would be *less* likely to vote for the Liberal Party if they did not allow a conscience vote on voluntary assisted dying legislation.
 - One in five (26%) would be *more* likely to vote for the Liberal Party if they did not allow a conscience vote in voluntary assisted dying.

Figure 8: If the Liberal Party did *not* allow their MPs a conscience vote on VAD would you be more or less likely to vote for them at the next NSW state election (by voting intention)?



Method

The Australia Institute surveyed 1,008 people between 23 and 27 July 2021, online through Dynata's Rapid Results polling, with representative samples by gender, age and region.

The margin of error (95% confidence level) for the results is 3%.

Voting crosstabs show voting intentions for the NSW Legislative Assembly. Those who were undecided were asked which way they were leaning; these leanings are included in voting intention crosstabs. "Coalition" includes separate responses for Liberal and National. "Other" refers to Independent/Other.

Detailed results

This question is about voluntary euthanasia, also known as voluntary assisted dying.

If someone with a terminal illness who is experiencing unrelievable suffering asks to die, should a doctor be allowed to assist them to die?

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Coalition</i>	<i>Labor</i>	<i>Greens</i>	<i>One Nation</i>	<i>Other</i>
Yes, voluntary assisted dying should be legal	70%	70%	71%	78%	66%	57%
No, voluntary assisted dying should be against the law	15%	15%	15%	10%	20%	17%
Don't know / Not sure	15%	15%	14%	11%	14%	26%

	<i>Total</i>	<i>18-29</i>	<i>30-39</i>	<i>40-49</i>	<i>50-59</i>	<i>60+</i>
Yes, voluntary assisted dying should be legal	70%	66%	66%	67%	77%	72%
No, voluntary assisted dying should be against the law	15%	18%	15%	17%	9%	17%
Don't know / Not sure	15%	16%	19%	16%	14%	11%

	<i>Total</i>	<i>No religion</i>	<i>Catholicism</i>	<i>Anglicanism</i>	<i>Other Christianity</i>
Yes, voluntary assisted dying should be legal	70%	81%	64%	79%	57%
No, voluntary assisted dying should be against the law	15%	7%	19%	12%	23%
Don't know / Not sure	15%	12%	17%	9%	20%

Voluntary assisted dying laws have passed in Victoria, Tasmania, Western Australia, and South Australia. The laws will allow adult patients suffering intolerable pain and already dying of a terminal illness to access a lethal drug which they can use to end their life at a time of their choosing.

Do you support or oppose NSW passing similar laws to legalise voluntary assisted dying?

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Coalition</i>	<i>Labor</i>	<i>Greens</i>	<i>One Nation</i>	<i>Other</i>
Strongly support	43%	43%	44%	49%	40%	34%
Support	31%	31%	34%	33%	21%	26%
Oppose	7%	8%	8%	5%	3%	8%
Strongly oppose	7%	7%	3%	4%	17%	9%
Don't know / Not sure	13%	11%	11%	10%	19%	23%

	<i>Total</i>	<i>18-29</i>	<i>30-39</i>	<i>40-49</i>	<i>50-59</i>	<i>60+</i>
Strongly support	43%	34%	39%	38%	50%	50%
Support	31%	43%	32%	33%	28%	22%
Oppose	7%	10%	8%	8%	3%	8%
Strongly oppose	7%	4%	6%	6%	6%	11%
Don't know / Not sure	13%	10%	15%	15%	13%	10%

In Parliament, the term 'conscience vote' describes votes on moral and social issues where parliamentarians may use their personal conscience to vote and are not obliged to vote along party lines.

Regardless of whether you support voluntary assisted dying legislation or not, do you think political parties should treat the issue of voluntary assisted dying as a matter of personal conscience or as a matter of party policy?

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Coalition</i>	<i>Labor</i>	<i>Greens</i>	<i>One Nation</i>	<i>Other</i>
Personal conscience	65%	67%	63%	70%	56%	58%
Party policy	14%	15%	16%	14%	16%	4%
Don't know / Not sure	21%	18%	21%	15%	29%	38%

	<i>Total</i>	<i>18-29</i>	<i>30-39</i>	<i>40-49</i>	<i>50-59</i>	<i>60+</i>
Personal conscience	65%	57%	60%	61%	69%	75%
Party policy	14%	23%	15%	15%	9%	10%
Don't know / Not sure	21%	20%	24%	24%	21%	15%

A proposal to legalise voluntary assisted dying will be presented to the NSW Parliament soon. Currently, the National Party and the Labor Party are planning on allowing their parliamentarians a conscience vote on voluntary assisted dying.

If the Liberal Party did not allow their parliamentarians a conscience vote on voluntary assisted dying legislation, would you be more or less likely to vote for them at the next NSW state election?

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Coalition</i>	<i>Labor</i>	<i>Greens</i>	<i>One Nation</i>	<i>Other</i>
Much more likely	9%	13%	6%	9%	9%	0%
Somewhat more likely	13%	13%	14%	15%	7%	8%
Somewhat less likely	21%	23%	18%	23%	17%	15%
Much less likely	24%	10%	35%	30%	31%	35%
Don't know / Not sure	34%	41%	26%	23%	36%	42%

	<i>Total</i>	<i>18-29</i>	<i>30-39</i>	<i>40-49</i>	<i>50-59</i>	<i>60+</i>
Much more likely	9%	11%	12%	11%	2%	8%
Somewhat more likely	13%	21%	17%	14%	5%	10%
Somewhat less likely	21%	32%	20%	19%	16%	20%
Much less likely	24%	15%	21%	21%	33%	27%
Don't know / Not sure	34%	21%	31%	35%	44%	35%