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B2.

## ROMANOW TRACKING POLL

*Romanow Report in One-Year Rear View Mirror:  
Continued Support, Diminished Anxiety but  
Scepticism with Government's Response*



November 24, 2003  
www.ekos.com

### Methodology

#### ■ Telephone survey of the general public

- ❖ 1208 completed interviews with a national random sample of Canadians 16 years of age or older
  - ✓ Interview period: Nov. 18-20, 2003
  - ✓ National results valid within +/- 2.8 percentage points, 19 times out of 20
- ❖ The margin of error increases when the results are sub-divided
- ❖ It should also be noted that the refusal rate and other measurement errors could also increase the margin of error

- All the data were statistically weighted to ensure the sample's regional, gender and age composition reflects that of the actual population of Canada according to Census data.

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## Whither Health Care as Public Priority? (I)

- Remains the top priority
- Cumulative evidence suggests social investment, particularly health care, is receiving widening support vis-à-vis fiscal priorities, which are declining as urgent priorities in public consciousness
  - ❖ Nearly 2 in 3 pick social investment (health and education) over debt (1 in 5) and lower taxes (1 in 6)
- Despite its clear salience as dominant public priority, there is a very important shift occurring in public perception. Since start of the new decade, the sense of pervasive decline has dropped sharply; pattern of rising confidence has accelerated over the past year
  - ❖ At the close of the decade 72 per cent said system was deteriorating, but now only 44 per cent take this view, which is down sharply from 63 per cent in December of last year
  - ❖ Public now fairly divided on issue of deterioration vs. stability/improvements
  - ❖ Profound turnaround in public confidence



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## Whither Health Care as Public Priority? (II)

- Appears cumulative effects of health accord and Romanow Commission have staunched bleeding in public confidence in system, but evidence also shows enormous even strengthening support for still further investment
  - ❖ In other words, rising confidence has still not diminished support for further investment
- In terms of hard trade-offs, the public pick increasing supply of health professionals as their top choice and privatization as the least favoured
- The pitched national debate about health care has produced a clear consensus that equal access is the sine qua non of the system
  - ❖ Support for two-tier privatization has dwindled on virtually all indicators, while support for a universal public system has strengthened
  - ❖ The “offside” group on this debate is roughly 25-30 per cent of Canadians



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## Romanow – Still Hitting the Mark

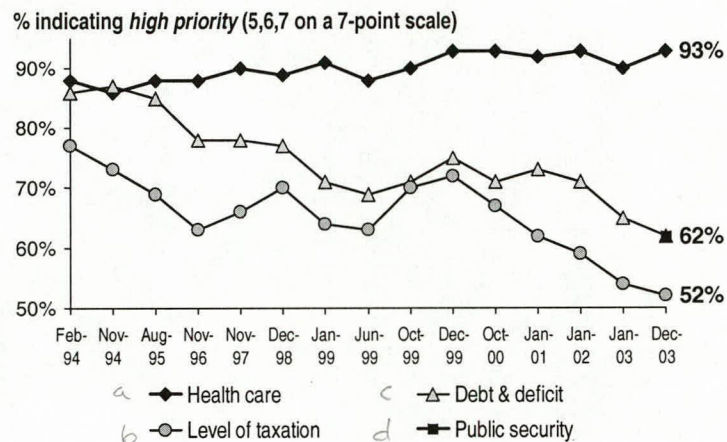
- Some evidence of slight decline in awareness (from 47 to 42 per cent)
- Broad impressions continue to lean heavily to favourable 49:13 today vs. 52:15 in December 2002
- Support for Romanow is higher amongst the more aware (70:13)
- Still seen as largely reflecting core Canadian values (52:10) with 84 per cent of those who are at least somewhat familiar supporting the broad recommendations; notably, only 12 per cent oppose
- Scepticism about seriousness of senior government response to Romanow
- Very little awareness of Health Council debate (8 per cent clearly, 14 per cent vaguely) but strong support for principles (55:14)

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## Longer-Term Tracking of Priorities

Q1  
 (a-d)

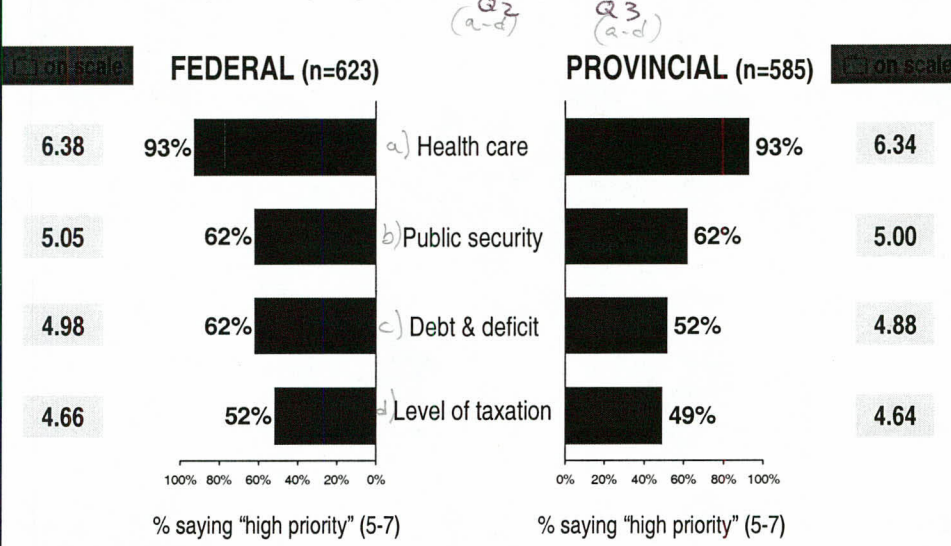
Q: Thinking not just of today but over the next five years, what priority should the federal government place on each of the following areas?



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## Government Priorities

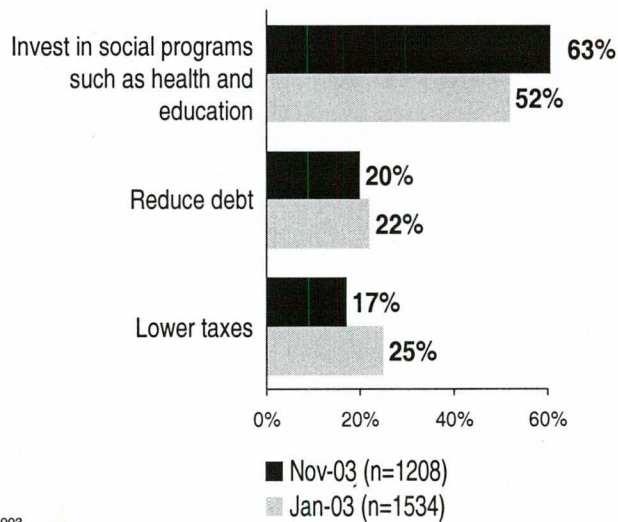
Q: Over the next five years what priority should the **federal/your provincial** government place on...



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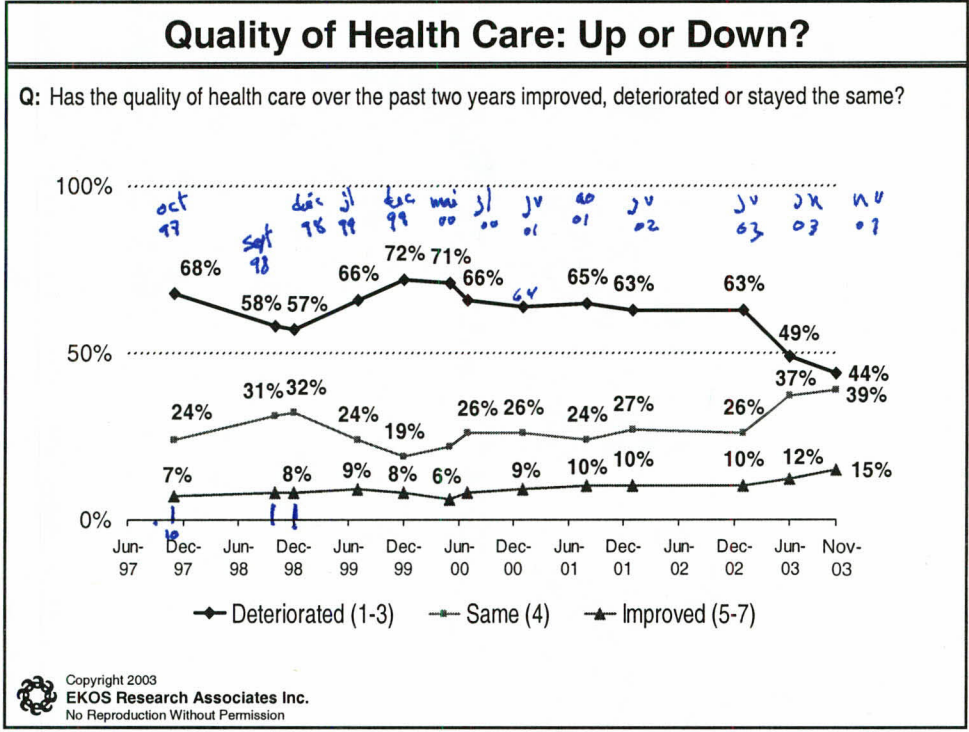
## Fiscal vs. Social

QA Q: If the federal government has a budgetary surplus in the next few years, how would you prefer it to be used?

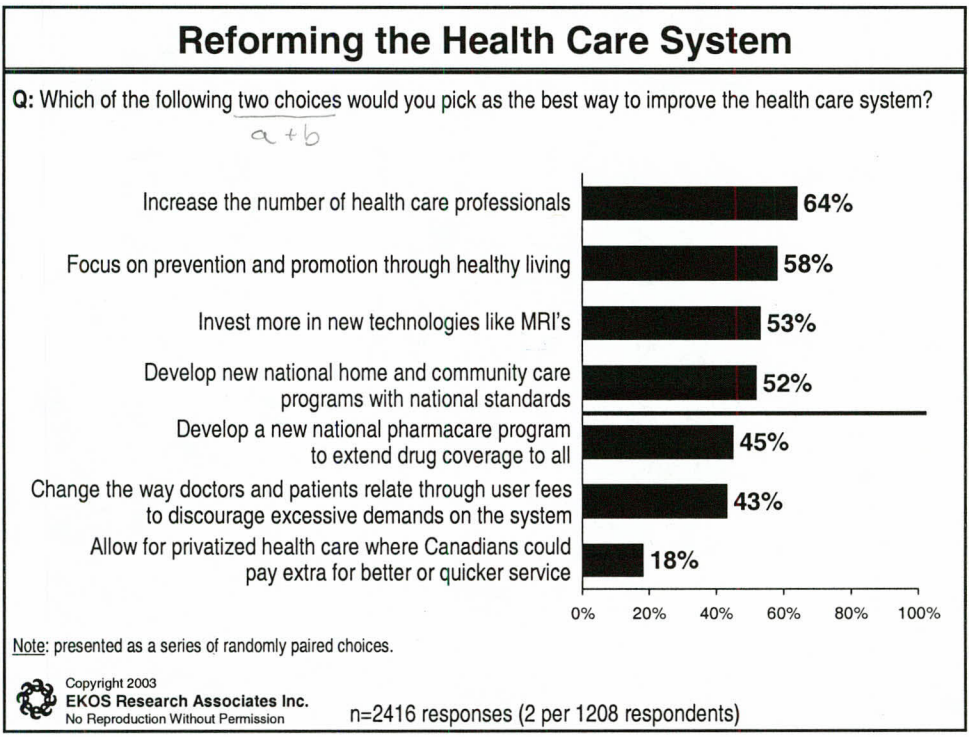


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Q5



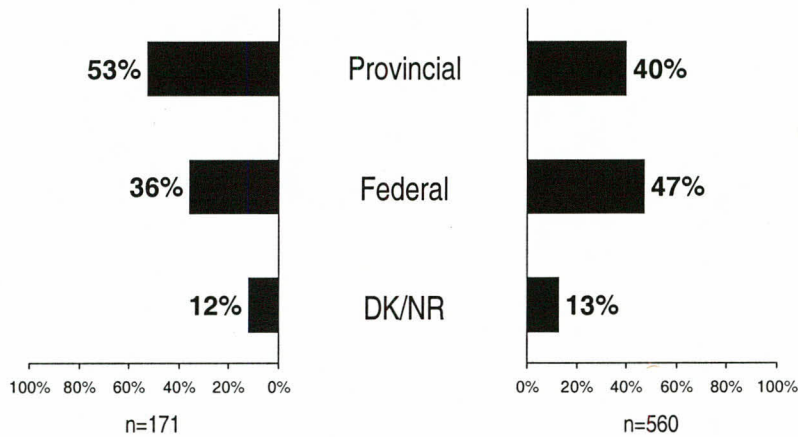
Q6.  
(a+b)



## Responsibility for Change in Health Care

Q: Which level of government, federal or provincial, would you say is most responsible for the improvement?

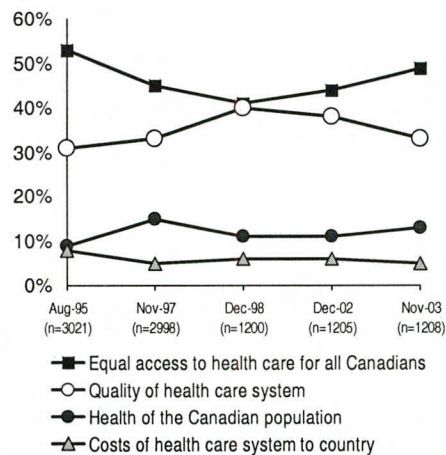
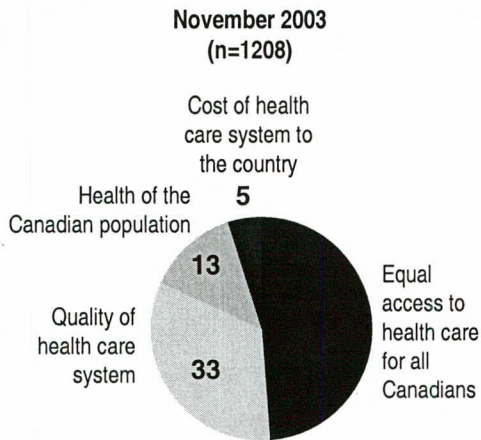
Q: Which level of government, federal or provincial, would you say is most responsible for the deterioration?



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## Health Care: Ultimate Goals

Q: Which of the following aspects of health care is of greatest importance to you?



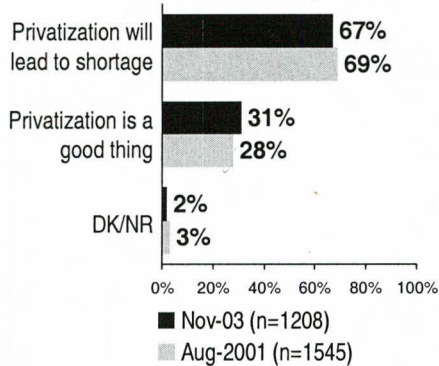
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Tracking results from Rethinking Government

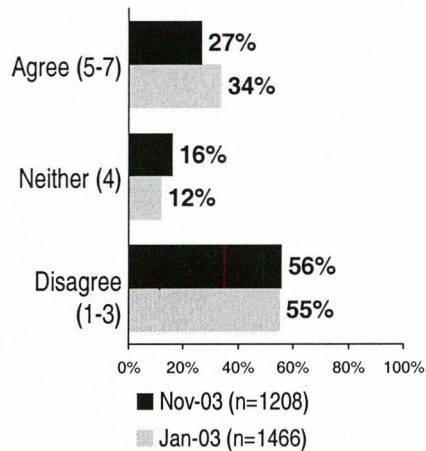
## Support for Privatization

10 Q: Some people argue that allowing some privatization of the health care system is a good thing because it will relieve the pressure on public institutions like hospitals that are already overcrowded.

Others argue that once private health care services start to become widely available, it won't be long before quality public health care services are hard to find.



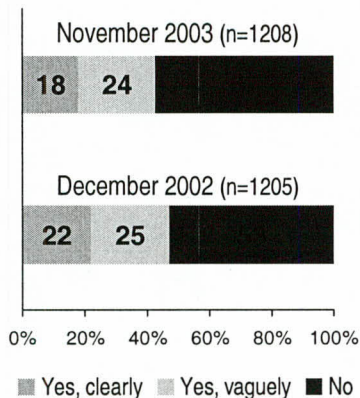
11 Q: To what extent do you agree or disagree with: Individuals should be allowed to pay extra to get quicker access to health care services?



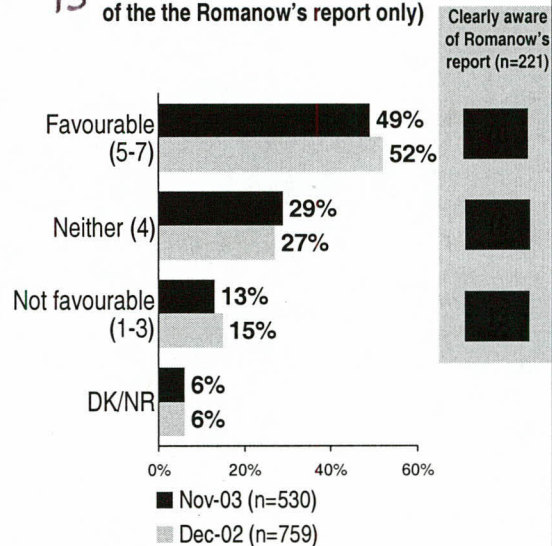
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## Awareness/Impression of the Romanow Report

12 Q: Do you recall hearing or seeing anything about the Romanow report on the future of health care in Canada?



13 Q: Was your overall impression generally favorable or unfavorable? (Filter: clearly/vaguely aware of the Romanow's report only)

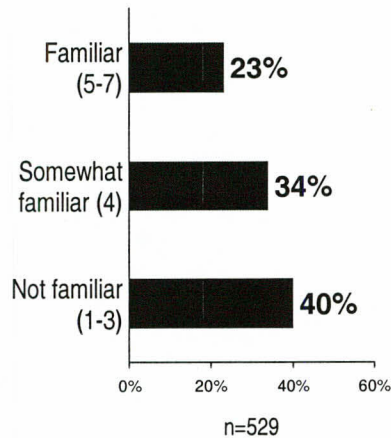


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## Romanow's Recommendations and Government Action

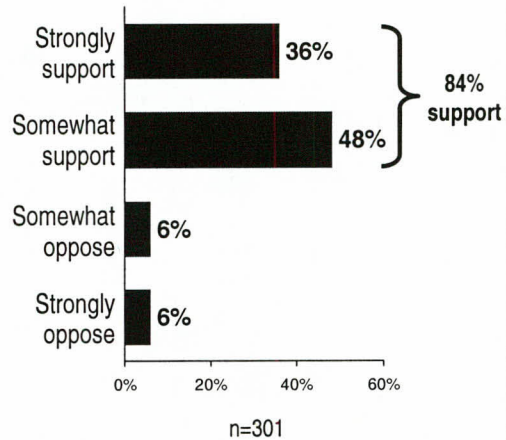
Q: How familiar are you with the broad recommendations of the Romanow Report?

14



Q: And would you say that you support or oppose these recommendations?

15

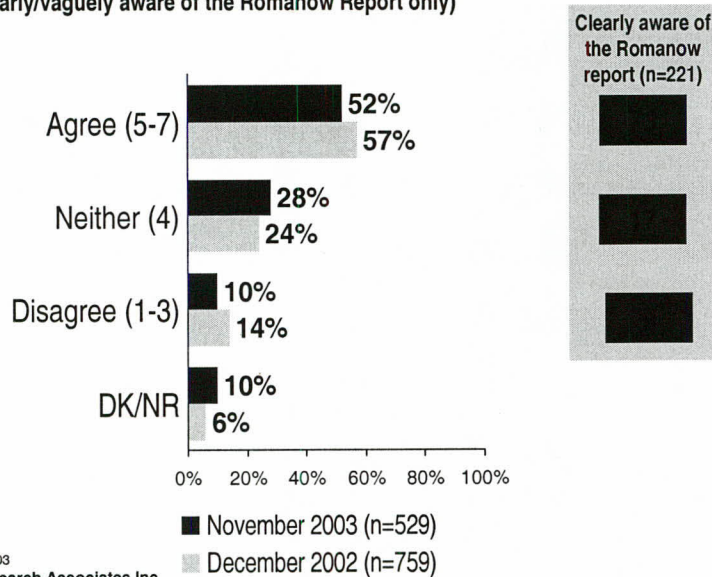


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## Romanow Report Reflects Values of Canadians

Q: I think the Romanow Report did a good job at reflecting the core values of Canadians.  
(Filter: clearly/vaguely aware of the Romanow Report only)

16



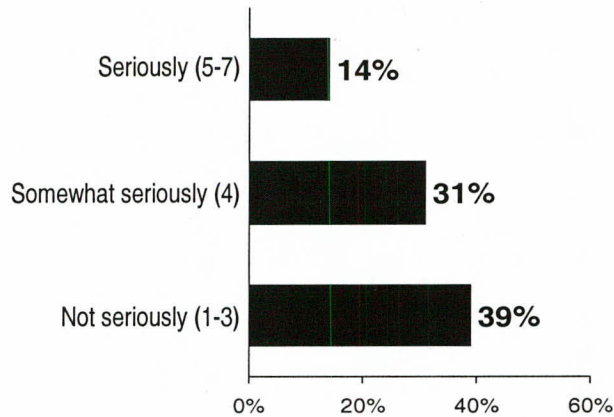
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## Government Concern with Recommendations

Q: How seriously do you think the federal/provincial has taken the recommendations of the Romanow Report?

17



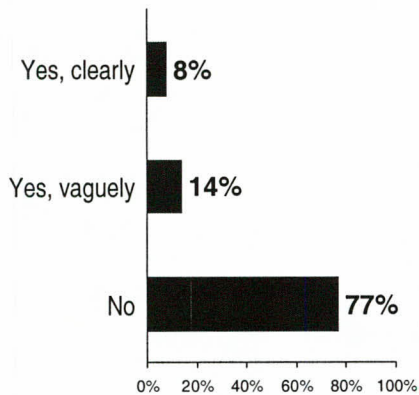
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n=529

## Awareness and Support for Health Council of Canada

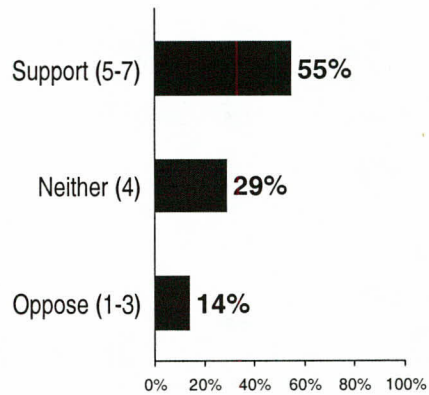
Q: Do you recall hearing or seeing anything about the proposed creation of the Health Council of Canada?

18



Q: In general, do you support or oppose the creation of the Health Council of Canada?

19



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n=1208

## Bottom Line

- **Current outlook on health care characterized by four factors:**
  - ❖ **Continued top priority status**
  - ❖ **New sense that decline is stopping; growing recognition of viability of the public system**
  - ❖ **Strengthened consensus on dominance of equal access**
  - ❖ **Strengthening public will for continued/deepened investment**
- **Romanow in hindsight**
  - ❖ **Romanow continues to be seen as meeting the mark in terms of core values**
  - ❖ **Evidence of scepticism about resolve of senior governments to move forward**
  - ❖ **Health council poorly understood but strong support for principles**

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