

Likely Shock Labor By-Election Win in SA

Written by The Conversation

At the March 2014 South Australian election, Labor won 23 seats out of 47, to 22 Liberals and two Independents, despite losing the statewide Two Party Preferred (2PP) vote by a 53.0-47.0 margin. Shortly after the election, Independent Member for Fisher Bob Such was hospitalised with a brain tumour, and the other Independent sided with Labor, giving Labor a fourth term in government.

Bob Such passed away two months ago, and a by-election in Fisher was held yesterday to replace him. At the March election, when Fisher's votes were counted on a Liberal vs Labor basis, the [Liberals won the 2PP](#) by 57.2-42.8. The Liberals were thus the clear favourites to win the by-election. Their main threat was thought to be an Independent, Dan Woodyatt, running on continuing Such's legacy.

With 59% of enrolled voters counted last night, the Liberals led on primary votes with 35.0% (down 0.1%), with Labor's vote surging 10.1% to 27.9%. Woodyatt won 22.5%, but this was 15.9% less than Such had won in March. After preferences, [Labor led the Liberals](#) by a 52.1-47.9 margin, a huge 9.4% swing to Labor. Labor had led by 50.9-49.1 last night, but the correction of a counting error in one booth boosted Labor's lead.

There are still many postal and pre-poll votes to be counted, and this will happen on Monday and Tuesday. However, Labor performed reasonably well on declaration votes at the March election, and Labor leads of over 52-48 are not often overturned. Another possible way that Labor could lose is if the Independent Woodyatt were to receive a strong flow of minor candidate preferences, and overtake Labor after distribution of the minor candidates' preferences. To do this, he certainly needs to lift his vote among the declaration votes, but postals are generally not friendly for non-major party candidates.

If the likely Labor win is confirmed, it would give Labor a majority in the SA lower house. There have been several examples of governments gaining seats at by-elections, but these cases all involved first term governments. A fourth term government gaining a seat at a by-election is unprecedented, [according to Antony Green](#). This by-election was a very poor result for the Liberals, and probably reflects both state and Federal factors.

Another Dire Poll for Federal Coalition

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A [Galaxy poll](#) published today has Labor leading the Coalition by a 55-45 margin, a 4% swing to Labor from the last Galaxy in early October. Primary votes were 41% for Labor (up 5), 38% for the Coalition (down 4), and 11% for the Greens (down 1). [64% wanted](#)

[Abbott's](#)

paid parental leave package scaled back, and 41% would prefer Malcolm Turnbull as Treasurer, compared to 21% who prefer incumbent Joe Hockey. Unfortunately, the News Ltd tabloids that publish Galaxy are often not forthcoming on other poll details such as fieldwork dates and sample size.

Other polls had 55-45 leads for Labor immediately after the budget, but the Galaxy at that time was only 53-47 to Labor. Labor's Galaxy primary vote of 41% is one of the few times this year in any poll that Labor's primary vote has been headed by a "4".

In Queensland, a [ReachTEL poll](#) for Premier Campbell Newman's seat of Ashgrove has him trailing Labor candidate Kate Jones by a 55-45 margin, a 1% swing to Newman from a ReachTEL in late September.

Victorian Election Late Counting Update

It is now virtually certain that Labor has won Carrum, Frankston and Bentleigh, all by margins of 0.5-0.6%. This will give Labor 47 lower house seats out of 88, a comfortable six seat majority. Prahran remains in doubt; the first batches of absentees were strong for the Liberals, but Labor clawed back ground on later batches, and now only trails by 41 votes on a two candidate preferred basis. Final votes will be counted tomorrow in Prahran, followed by the formal distribution of preferences. The Greens still have a real chance of surpassing Labor on Animal Justice Party preferences. If they can do this, they could win the seat on Labor preferences. [Kevin Bonham](#)

has been following the Prahran count very closely.

The electoral commission has now rechecked the votes of 50% of enrolled voters for the upper house. They probably need to recheck around 70% to reach the point where there is new information.

US Midterm Election Results Confirmed

Runoff elections were held today Australian time in Louisiana to elect two House members and one Senator. The Republicans won all three races by double digit margins, ousting Democrat

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Mary Landrieu from the Senate. The Congress that commences in January next year will have a House of 247 Republicans to 188 Democrats, a Republican gain of 13. The Senate will have 54 Republicans to 46 Democrats (includes two Independents), a Republican gain of 9. Republicans won the [overall House popular vote](#) by 5.7%, 0.9% less than their 2010 margin, but they won five more seats. In 2012, Democrats won the popular vote by 1%, but failed to win the House, partly due to Republican gerrymandering.

The most important reason for the Democrats' dismal performance [was the turnout](#) . In the 2012 Presidential year, turnout was 59%, but in 2014 turnout was only 36%. Democrat voting groups such as Hispanics and young people are less likely to turn out at midterm elections, while those who absolutely hate Obama are highly motivated to vote.

Adrian Beaumont does not work for, consult to, own shares in or receive funding from any company or organisation that would benefit from this article, and has no relevant affiliations.

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