

The Canadian election will be held on Monday 19 October, and results will be known during the afternoon of Tuesday 20 October Melbourne time. This election is of some interest to Australians because Canada's Conservative PM Stephen Harper was one of Abbott's few international allies on climate change policies.

I [previewed the Canadian election](#) over a month ago in this article about international elections. There are three major Canadian parties: the Tories, the centre-left Liberals, and the pro-labour New Democratic Party (NDP), which is further to the left than the Liberals. Canada uses the first past the post system for its elections, with all 338 seats up at this election.

In my early September article, the polls showed a close three-way race between the NDP, the Tories and the Liberals, with the NDP just ahead. Since then, there has been a clear decline in the NDP vote, with both the Tories and Liberals the initial beneficiaries. The election is now a contest between the Tories and Liberals.

The latest [Canadian Broadcasting Corp poll aggregate](#) has the Liberals leading with 33.8%, closely followed by the Tories at 32.4% with the NDP a distant third at 23.6%, and the Greens have 4.8%. The expected seat counts given these polls is 132 Liberal, 123 Tories and 80 NDP. However, the ranges of possible seat outcomes are wide, and if the Tories do a bit better than polls currently show, they could win a clear minority of the seats, though not the 170 seats needed for a majority. Since the anti-Tory vote is more concentrated with the Liberals, the Tories probably need at least 38% for a majority.

The NDP's decline in the French-speaking province of Quebec has been rapid. In early September, the NDP had 48% of the Quebec vote; now they have only 29%. At the 2011 election, the NDP dominated Quebec, winning 59 of 75 seats with only 5 for the Tories. As a result of the NDP's decline, Quebec is likely to be the only province where the Tories make gains. The separatist Quebec Bloc is currently projected to win two seats.

If the Tories win more seats than any other party, but fall short of a majority, the Liberals and NDP [could form a coalition](#) to oust the Tories. Although such a coalition is likely, it is no certainty, as the Liberals and NDP disagree on some issues.

Canadian election - ten days to go

Written by The Conversation USA

Tactical voting is already helping the Liberals. Under First Past the Post, a voter whose preferred party is uncompetitive must choose between voting for that party, or voting for the party with the best chance of defeating the party that voter dislikes most. The Greens and the NDP are now clearly uncompetitive in most seats, so those on the left who would normally prefer these two parties may vote for the Liberals to stop the Tories.

If the Tories manage to win a majority, it will be caused by split voting by the left parties and Canada's First Past the Post system. The [Liberals are proposing to change the electoral system](#) to Australian style preferential voting if they win the election, but first they need to win under the current system.

US Presidential election update

I also discussed the US presidential election in my article last month. The first votes that bind delegates to support candidates are in early February, and much can change in the next few months.

Donald Trump still leads the Republican Presidential nomination contest, but he has dropped to 23% from a high of over 30% in the [RealClearPolitics \(RCP\) poll average](#). Trump has experienced similar declines in Iowa and New Hampshire (NH), the first states to vote in the nomination process. Trump continues to lead only because none of his rivals have been able to consolidate the anti-Trump vote, but it is unlikely that this situation will continue indefinitely.

Two candidates - Rick Perry and Scott Walker - have already dropped out of the Republican race, reducing the field to 15 candidates from 17. Walker's withdrawal was a surprise as he was once one of the favourites for the nomination. Bad poll numbers combined with poor fundraising forced both withdrawals.

If an establishment candidate does eventually win the nomination, it is now likely that it will be Marco Rubio, not Jeb Bush. The latest [Public Policy Poll](#) gives Bush a 34-49 favourable rating among Republicans, while Rubio has a 57-24 rating. Trump currently has a 50-38 rating, and current second place holder Ben Carson has a hugely favourable 71-16 rating. Despite Carson's rating, he has not held elected office, and is considered unlikely to win the nomination.

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On the Democratic side, Hillary Clinton has dropped [from about 60% support to 40%](#) in the last three months; this drop has been caused by continued news over her emails, and speculation that Vice President Joe Biden could enter the race. If Biden runs, Clinton's path to the nomination would be more complicated, but otherwise she should defeat populist left winger Bernie Sanders comfortably, especially as Biden's support comes from Clinton more than Sanders.

Left parties win seat majority in Portugal, but conservatives continue to govern

The Portuguese election was held last Sunday 4 October. [The conservative coalition won 38.6% of the vote,](#) to 32.4% for the centre left Socialists, and a combined 18.5% for two far left parties. Of 230 seats, the conservatives won 104, with 85 for the Socialists and 36 for the far left; one seat went to a minor party, and four seats have not been awarded yet. There was an 11.8% swing against the conservatives at this election.

Although the left parties combined have a majority of 121 of the 230 seats, the Socialists are unable to work with the two far left parties. As a result, the conservatives will retain government with some support from the Socialists.

Australian polling update

In the last two weeks, we have only had Essential and Morgan polls, with Newspoll due next week. Morgan gave the Coalition a crushing 56-44 lead using respondent allocated preferences from polling conducted over the last two weekends; this was 55-45 on previous election preferences, a 1.5% gain for the Coalition.

Essential's two week rolling average moved to 52-48 to the Coalition the week before last, and stayed there last week. We know that the Essential sample the week after Turnbull became PM was 50-50, and that the next week's sample was 53.5-46.5 to the Coalition, so that implies that [last week's sample was another 50-50](#)

I will have a full report on Australian polling next Thursday.

Canadian election - ten days to go

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