

Tasmanian Senate result: 5 Labor, 4 Liberals, 2 Greens, 1 Lambie

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Today the “Button” was pressed to distribute preferences for the Tasmanian Senate. On final primary votes, [Labor had 4.37 quotas](#), the Liberals 4.23, the Greens 1.45, Jacqui Lambie 1.08 and One Nation 0.33. This was further complicated by substantial below the line votes for Labor’s No. 6 candidate, Lisa Singh, and the Liberals’ No. 5 candidate, Richard Colbeck.

Singh won an amazing 6.1% of the vote (0.80 quotas) in her own right, and this practically guaranteed five seats for Labor because of the way votes were split between Labor’s No. 4 and Singh. After being demoted to the “unwinnable” No. 6 position on the Labor ticket, she found a way to win. [Singh is the first Senate](#) winner to overcome her party’s ticket order since 1953.

Colbeck won 4.0% of the vote (0.52 quotas), but he had to wait for the Liberals’ No. 4 to reach quota before he could gain preferences from above the line votes. In the event, he was overtaken by both the Greens’ Nick McKim and One Nation’s Kate McCulloch, and [was excluded well](#) before either of these candidates. McKim then defeated McCulloch by just 141 votes to win the final seat.

Tasmania will send a very anti-Coalition delegation to Canberra. The Liberals lost all three of their Tasmanian House seats on a 6% statewide two party swing, and have now won only four of Tasmania’s 12 Senate seats, with seven for Labor and the Greens, and one for Lambie, who has voted with the left on many issues.

Senate counting in the mainland states should conclude next week. In last [Wednesday’s article](#), I said that two seats were doubtful - the final NSW seat, and the final WA seat.

In NSW, the [Liberal Democrats have surged](#) in late counting to 0.40 quotas, well ahead of the Christian Democrats on 0.35. David Leyonhjelm is thus likely to be re-elected, joining fellow crossbenchers Nick Xenophon and Jacqui Lambie by being returned at this election.

In WA, the Greens currently have 1.36 quotas, and the Nationals have 0.33. The contest between the second Green and lead National is still too close for a likely winner to be called.

Labor leads in Herbert by 35 votes after recount, but it's not over yet

A recount was completed last night in the Queensland seat of Herbert, and [Labor led by 35 votes](#), up from 13 votes on the first count. Labor's position turned around dramatically on Monday, from a deficit of 12 votes in the early afternoon to a lead of 73 by the evening. On Tuesday, Labor lost some ground, but still led with all votes recounted.

However, this is not quite the end of the matter, as a formal distribution of preferences must still be undertaken. In the distribution, the candidate with the lowest vote is excluded, and their preferences distributed to all remaining candidates. Then the new lowest vote candidate is excluded, and so on until one candidate has over 50% of the formal vote.

In the vast majority of seats, the distribution of preferences is a formality, as we already know who the final two candidates are. In a very close seat like Herbert, it provides an additional check on the preference count. The distribution for Herbert will start tomorrow, and is expected to take at least two days. It is unlikely that the current 35 vote margin will be overturned.

The Liberals are threatening to challenge the result in the High Court, sitting as the Court of Disputed Returns. [Possible reasons for a challenge](#) are that 85 defense force personnel may have been unable to vote, and similarly for 39 hospital patients. While the case is before the courts, the declared winner will be seated.

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