

Turnbull's Newspoll ratings slump continues

Written by Adrian Beaumont, Honorary Associate, School of Mathematics and Statistics, University of Melbourne

This [week's Newspoll](#), conducted from last Thursday to Sunday from a sample of 1670, had Labor retaining a 52-48 lead from primary votes of 39% Coalition (steady), 37% Labor (up 1) and 10% Greens (steady).

29% were satisfied with Turnbull's performance (down 2), and 57% were dissatisfied (up 1), for a net approval of -28, a new record low. Turnbull's satisfied rating is now below Abbott's rating of 30% when he was dumped, though Turnbull's net approval is still five points better than Abbott's at that point. Shorten's net approval was up one point to -15.

The Coalition will be relieved not to have taken a voting intentions hit from last week's fiasco over guns that led to a public showdown between Abbott and Turnbull. The political media love writing "government in crisis" type headlines, but often the public does not react to the "good week/bad week" narrative.

Despite Turnbull's slump, the Coalition's vote is holding up relatively well. [Kevin Bonham](#) suggests two plausible reasons for this. Either people are mildly dissatisfied with Turnbull, but not yet angry with him; and/or the people who are most likely to detest Turnbull are on the hard right, and will therefore still vote for or preference the Coalition.

An additional Newspoll question relates to the Queensland University of Technology students who complained on Facebook after being ejected from an indigenous-only computer room. 57% opposed 18C being used to sue these students, and only 21% were in favour.

Essential at 52-48 to Labor

Primary votes in [this week's Essential](#), based on the last two weeks of fieldwork with a sample of 1780, were 38% Coalition, 37% Labor, 10% Greens, 6% One Nation and 3% Nick Xenophon Team. Additional questions are based on last week's fieldwork.

72% were concerned about the risk of a terrorist attack in Australia. 73% said the threat of terrorism in Australia had increased over the last few years, and only 2% thought it had decreased. The least supported measure to combat terrorism was allowing the government to

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monitor phone calls and data of all citizens (44% support, 43% opposed).

42% thought ISIS was the biggest threat to international peace, followed by 21% for a Trump US Presidency and 11% for growing inequality.

36% supported re-establishing the building commission, and 16% were opposed; in August this was 32-18. 39% thought this was an important issue, and 38% thought it was not important; in August not important led 40-35. When the importance of one issue is asked in isolation, polls will show that issue as more important than when asked as part of a set of issues.

In last [week's Essential](#) , assuming a same sex marriage plebiscite is blocked by the Senate, 55% thought the Coalition should agree to a parliamentary vote, and 30% thought they should do nothing until the next election. 58% were not confident that the current government could get things done that are needed, and 31% were confident. 35% thought the government would run full term, and 39% thought there would be an early election.

41% approved of the NSW government's backflip on greyhound racing, and 38% disapproved; in NSW, this was 44-40 approve. 79% said they would be concerned if Donald Trump became US President, including 61% very concerned.

Respondents were asked if they thought previous major government decisions were good or bad for Australia. Privatisations of major government companies were the only decisions with more bad than good respondents. By far the most popular reforms were the introduction of compulsory superannuation (71% good), and the formation of Medibank, now Medicare (63% good).

On Friday 14 October, [Graham Richardson](#) urged Shorten to abandon Labor's 50% Renewable Energy Target by 2030. However, Essential has 59% approving of this target, and only 19% disapproving.

60% approved of a tax cut for small business (less than \$2 million in annual revenue), and 17% disapproved. However, by 61-20 respondents disapproved of tax cuts for bigger business. By

41-26, respondents disapproved of redefining small business so that some companies with more than \$2 million in revenue could be included.

A [Morgan phone poll](#) with a small sample of 588, conducted 18-20 October, has Labor leading by 55-45 (see the fine print before the tables for the two party result).

The most interesting result from this poll is that 58% support Muslim immigration, with 33% opposed. In [late July, Essential](#) found 49% in favour of a ban on Muslim immigration. Asking specifically about a ban is likely to put respondents in a more negative frame of mind. There may also be a “shy Tory” factor in live phone polling that does not appear in an online panel poll.

ACT election final results: 12 Labor, 11 Liberals, 2 Greens

At the ACT election held on 15 October, [Labor won 12 of 25](#) seats, to 11 for the Liberals and 2 Greens. Labor will retain government with support from the Greens for a fifth successive term. The ACT uses the Hare Clark system with five 5-member electorates. Labor and the Greens won four of the five “pivot” seats, the third seats in each electorate.

At the 2012 election, Labor and the Liberals each won 8 of the 17 seats, and the sole Green supported Labor. As a percentage of total members, the Liberals dropped from 47% in 2012 to 44% now.

Three of the pivot seats were in some doubt on election night, but all went to the party leading on election night. In Brindabella, the Sex Party failed to make the final count, and the Liberals won. In Ginninderra, the Greens ended with a higher quota fraction than Labor, but Labor's votes were evenly spread, enabling two Labor candidates to defeat the Green. In Murrumbidgee, the Greens comfortably defeated the Liberals. [Kevin Bonham](#) has more details of the preference distributions.

Final primary votes were 38.4% for Labor (down 0.4 since 2012), 36.7% for the Liberals (down 2.2), 10.3% for the Greens (down 0.4) and 14.6% for all Others (up 3.0). The votes for other candidates were not concentrated enough to win seats.

US Presidential election: two weeks to go

The US election will be held on Tuesday 8 November, with results coming on Wednesday 9 November from 11am Melbourne time. I have been writing about this election for the University of Melbourne's US Election Watch, and [my articles are here](#) .

The next Australian Newspann is likely to come during the US election week. I am unlikely to have time to cover it.

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