

Queensland Galaxy: 52-48 to Labor as One Nation slumps

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

A [Queensland Galaxy poll](#) has Labor leading by 52-48, a one point gain for Labor since early February. Primary votes are 36% for Labor (up 5), 34% for the Liberal Nationals (up 1), 17% for One Nation (down 6) and 7% for the Greens (down 1).

Given the large increase in Labor's primary vote, the one point gain after preferences is low, probably due to rounding. Fieldwork dates and sample size have not been provided, but this poll is likely to have been conducted Wednesday and Thursday from a sample of 800-1000. The next Queensland election is due by early next year.

Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk's ratings are 47% approve (up 6) and 35% disapprove (down 2), for a net approval of +12, up eight points. Opposition leader Tim Nicholls has a net rating of -18, down six points. Palaszczuk's performance during Cyclone Debbie and associated floods was rated good or very good by 76%, and poor by just 16%.

Polling and election results from Australia and Europe indicate that support for far right parties has fallen since Donald Trump became US President. One Nation, Geert Wilders' Party of Freedom and Marine Le Pen all underperformed polls taken a month before the election at the WA election, Dutch election and French election first round respectively. French polling has Macron thumping Le Pen in the runoff, and UK polling has the UK Independence Party (UKIP) slumping into single figures.

It is likely that the far right's performance is related to Trump, who is very unpopular in the rest of the world. Globally, far right parties are closely associated with Trump, but some far right supporters dislike him, and these are deserting.

Essential at 53-47 to Labor, and more Newspoll questions

In [last week's Essential](#), Labor led by 53-47. Primary votes were 37% Coalition, 36% Labor, 10% Greens, 8% One Nation and 3% Nick Xenophon Team. Voting intentions are based on two weeks' fieldwork with a sample of 1810, while other questions are based on one week's sample.

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39% thought the changes to 457 visas are about right, 28% thought they do not go far enough in regulating foreign workers, and 16% thought they go too far. 59% approved of allowing workers on visas to apply for permanent residency, and 23% disapproved. 78% agreed that people applying for permanent residency should be put on a probationary visa before being granted citizenship, and just 10% disagreed.

40% (up 3 since August 2016) thought Tony Abbott should resign from Parliament, 17% (down 8) thought he should be given a ministry, and 17% (down 4) thought he should remain a backbencher.

48% said they had voted for the Coalition parties in at least one Federal or State election in the last decade, 47% had voted Labor, 18% for the Greens, 8% for One Nation, 5% for the Nick Xenophon Team and 11% for an Independent.

The 8% for One Nation is clearly too high, as the party barely existed before last year's Federal election, winning 4.3% in the Senate - this is an example of false recall. In contrast, only 1% recalled voting for Palmer United Party, which won more votes in 2013 than One Nation did in 2016.

Additional questions from last week's Newspoll have been released. 70% supported spending cuts to balance the budget, with just 20% for increased taxation. However, when asked about welfare cuts, 61% were opposed and just 30% in favour. While spending cuts in the abstract are far more popular than increased taxation, specific cuts can become very unpopular.

By 49-42, voters were opposed to allowing young people to access their superannuation to buy their first home. By 54-28, voters favoured reducing tax breaks for investors.

Last week, Family First merged with the Australian Conservatives (Cory Bernardi's party). This will have no impact on the Senate balance of power, as Family First's new Senator, Lucy Gichuhi, is not part of the merger, and [will sit as an Independent](#). Two Family First members of the SA upper house will become Australian Conservatives.

French Presidential runoff: 7 May

In the first round of the French Presidential election held on 23 April, [centrist Emmanuel Macron won](#) 24.0% of the vote, followed by the far right Marine Le Pen on 21.3%, conservative Francois Fillon on 20.0% and the hard left Jean-Luc Mélenchon on 19.6%. The top two vote winners, Macron and Le Pen, qualified for the runoff next Sunday 7 May. Polls close at 4am Monday 8 May Melbourne time.

Since the first round, there has been a small movement to [Le Pen in runoff polling](#) , but Macron still leads by about 60-40. Fillon and Socialist candidate Benoit Hamon, who won 6.4%, have both endorsed Macron, but Mélenchon has not endorsed yet.

A key reason for Le Pen's gains is that the abstention rate among Mélenchon's supporters has risen from 30% at the start of the runoff campaign to 40% now. As with the US Presidential election, some on the hard left consider an established centrist candidate (Macron or Clinton) to be as bad as the far right Le Pen or Trump. However, Macron is far enough ahead that abstention from the hard left is very unlikely to cost him the election.

I will be doing an article on the runoff for the [University of Melbourne's Election Watch](#) late next week.

UK general election: 8 June

In polls taken in the days following UK Prime Minister Theresa May's announcement of the election, the Conservatives surged at the expense of UKIP. The [Wikipedia poll graph](#) has the Conservatives on 47%, Labour on 26%, the Liberal Democrats on 10% and UKIP dropping to 7%.

Recent polls have been better for Labour. A YouGov poll published today has the Conservative lead at 13 points, down from 23 points last Sunday. Another poll published today has the lead at 11 points. Both these polls have Labour at 31%, which would be unchanged on the 2015 result.

If the Conservatives fail to win a thumping majority, May's authority is likely to be dented, in much the same way as Turnbull's authority has been dented by the Coalition's unexpected

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narrow win in 2016.

Jeremy Corbyn may ironically have Donald Trump to thank for Labour's gains. A late March poll gave Trump an [18% approve, 60% disapprove rating](#) with the UK public. Being perceived as an anti-Trump may work for Corbyn.

UK local government elections will be held on Thursday, with most results in by Saturday Melbourne time. Governments do much worse at local elections than at general elections, so any overall Conservative national popular vote projected win would imply that the Conservatives are headed for a large general election victory.

As UK polls have not had a good record, these local elections, which tally real votes, will be seen as an alternative guide to the general election.

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