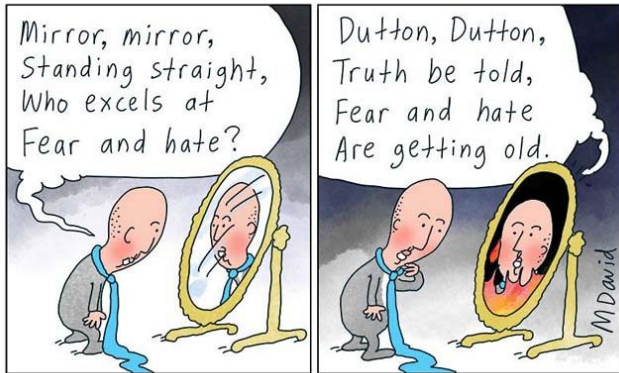


# New Parliament, new Coalition leaders, same old lies

By Alan Austin

7 November 2022



**The strategy of the current Coalition in Opposition is to continue its campaign of deliberate malicious falsehoods, as [Alan Austin](#) reports.**

REPLIES TO THE Albanese Government's first [budget](#) show the Liberal and National Parties plan to resume the malevolent false attacks against Labor that have characterised past conservative oppositions.

But, hey, why not? They have worked admirably before. With Australia's craven mass media steadfastly refusing to call out the lies, there's every chance they will succeed again.

Opposition Leader [Peter Dutton](#)'s official [budget reply speech](#) contained more than 15 explicit falsehoods. IA has searched for a mainstream media outlet that has exposed even one of these — without success. Not a single fib was identified in [David Crowe](#)'s detailed [account](#) in the Nine Entertainment

newspapers.

Even [The Guardian](#), which ran detailed blow-by-blow reportage of Dutton's budget reply, declined to highlight the obvious lies. It did note he was continuing 'to languish in the past for a while' and observed him claiming 'the Budget shows "yet again" that Labor "cannot manage the economy when it forms government" – a line that has been repeated by the Coalition for decades'.

But *The Guardian* did not challenge the deceptions. Nor did [the ABC](#), [The Conversation](#), [Sky News](#), nor anyone else.

## The specific blatant falsehoods

Dutton's top ten most blatant fabrications were:

1. "Thanks to the Coalition Government's record, the fundamentals of the Australian economy are strong... Treasurer [Josh Frydenberg](#)'s policies kept our nation afloat."

Over the Coalition's eight years and eight months, Australia's economy suffered the worst setback relative to the rest of the developed world in its history. When [Tony Abbott](#) won the 2013 Election, Australia had the [best-performed](#) economy in the world and had been the top economy for four of the preceding five years.

By the end of Abbott's second year, Australia had slipped to eighth, following disastrous tax

decisions and appalling waste. By 2021, Australia's economy ranked a dismal [23rd](#) in the world.

2. *"Australia emerged from the [COVID-19] pandemic in an economic position the envy of most nations with debt lower than any other major advanced economy."*

According to the latest data from the World Bank's [development indicators](#), advanced countries with lower central government debt than Australia's include New Zealand, Sweden, Switzerland, South Korea, Taiwan, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Estonia, Georgia, Uruguay, Turkey, Malaysia and Peru.

3. *"This Labor Government talks down our economy, but could not name a single country whose position they would rather be in."*

Countries with stronger economies when Dutton's party lost office – based on GDP [growth](#), jobless [rates](#) and budget [deficits](#) – include the Netherlands, Norway, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Taiwan, Denmark, Hungary, Israel and the Czech Republic.

4. *"By 2019, the Coalition brought the budget back into balance for the first time in 11 years."*

The Coalition never delivered a balanced budget or a surplus — despite governing during a period of strong global growth, booming [trade](#) and record [commodity](#) prices. The closest was a deficit of \$690 million in 2019. As shown [here](#) last week, that should have been a \$39.5 billion surplus.

5. *"This Labor Government's first budget*

*axed \$2.8 billion dollars of infrastructure projects... this Government has slashed \$10 billion dollars from regional Australia."*

It is false to characterise shutting down Coalition rorts as disadvantaging rural communities. Corrupt [spending](#) by the former Government was of the order of \$194 billion. Stopping these rorts is critical.

6. *“The final budget outcome for 2021-22 revealed a \$48 billion dollar reduction in the deficit.”*

This is a sneaky attempt to claim success because an outcome was better than an earlier forecast. In fact, the 2021-22 result was a dismal \$32.0 billion deficit. It would have been a \$59.9 billion [surplus](#) absent rampant tax evasion and rorts.

7. *“Under Labor, the tax paid will increase by \$142 billion dollars over the next four years.”*

Of course tax receipts will increase. Under sound management, salaries rise, company profits grow, imports and exports expand. Hence all taxes will increase. Depicting this as aberrant or a failure is foolish as well as mendacious.

8. *“As for Labor’s claim about ‘\$1 trillion dollars of debt’, even the ABC’s Fact Check didn’t support the claim.”*

Gross debt was [forecast](#) in Josh Frydenberg’s March 2022 Budget to reach \$1,056 billion by June 2024. In last month’s Labor [Budget](#), this is down to \$1,004 billion. There was no misrepresentation by Labor. The ABC’s fact-checking [unit](#) managed by political partisans at [RMIT](#) could do better.

9. *“Remember the pink batts? Remember the school halls? They were designed when this Treasurer was the Chief of Staff to the then Treasurer, [Wayne Swan](#). The programs were a disaster.”*

According to more than 160 economists, world leaders and social commentators, Australia’s set of responses to the 2008 [Global Financial Crisis](#) was the world’s one outstanding success. Direct quotes are all

tabulated at Friendlyjordies’ [The Facts](#).

Dutton’s party maliciously attacked the insulation and school building schemes in Opposition, but objectively were extraordinarily [successful](#).

10. *“Labor will continue to misrepresent the truth until the next election to mask its own bad decisions.”*

Classic attribution of one’s own glaring guilt to opponents. The Coalition is the party of serial misrepresentation. See above.

## Why this matters

Observers across the world are watching with dismay the [surge](#) in anger, hatred and killings in the United States which began in 2016.

The root cause of this ever-worsening violence – which now has American life expectancy [declining](#), alone in the developed world – is the [campaign](#) of malicious lies and conspiracy theories advanced by the Trumpian Republicans and amplified daily on [Fox News](#) and its copycats.

If the Murdoch media and the Coalition under its present leaders have their way, the same will be replicated in Australia. This must be resisted. Lies must be exposed whenever they are told.

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