

Griffith by-election: The morning after

By *Bob Ellis*

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The big news of yesterday was not how fifty-five thousand Brisbane people voted — but why fifteen thousand abstained, writes [Bob Ellis](#).

2014 Griffith by-election

- Last Updated: Sunday, 9 February 2014, 9:04:10 AM AEDT
- Roll: 97,168
- Votes Counted: 69,768 (71.8% of enrolment)



First Preferences				
Candidate	Party	Votes	% Vote	% Change
Timothy Lawrence	SPP	570	0.8	+0.7
Geoff Ebbs	GRN	6890	10.2	..
Christopher Williams	FFP	650	1.0	+0.2
Karel Boele	IND	458	0.7	+0.7
Anthony Ackroyd	BTA	526	0.8	+0.8
Anne Reid	SPA	379	0.6	..
Terri Butler	ALP	26357	39.0	-1.4
Melanie Thomas	PPA	1050	1.6	+1.6
Travis Windsor	IND	584	0.9	+0.9
Ray Sawyer	KAP	692	1.0	+0.3
Bill Glasson	LNP	29456	43.6	+1.3
...	RUA	0	0.0	-0.5
...	IND	0	0.0	-0.8
...	SA	0	0.0	-0.4
...	PUP	0	0.0	-3.4
Formal Votes		67612		
Informal		2156	3.1	-1.7
Total Votes / Turnout		69768	71.8	
Two-Candidate Preferred				
Terri Butler	ALP	35380	52.3	-0.7
Bill Glasson	LNP	32232	47.7	+0.7

(Image screenshot from abc.net.au)

ABOUT FIFTEEN THOUSAND BRISBANE PEOPLE did not vote in the Griffith by-election yesterday and will cop a fine for it.

This can be looked at in different ways.

One way is disgust at Rudd for vowing to serve out his term as their local member and then scarping.

Another was a weary, holiday wish for a private life over summer.

But a third was hating what was happening in Queensland and not wanting to vote Labor or Green — but not wanting to vote Abbott/Newman either.

The drought-parched farmers [no-one was going to help](#); the [hottest weather on record](#),

which Abbott called God's will and [not man's doing](#); the greedy, stumbling [Bjelke-like sarmajor](#) now goosestepping through paradise; the Navy involved, [perhaps, in torture](#) and the government refusing to investigate; the towing back of boats we are [gifting to smugglers](#) and getting away with it...

All of this added up to a kind of paralysis, tinged by disgust, and the kind of electoral nausea that, in Bjelke's days, and Russ Hinze's, and the days of the [Moonlight State](#), caused people of the civilised middle to migrate south or take drugs or enter academia.

They didn't want to think about it anymore and, yesterday, chose not to turn up and vote, and pay a fine for the biliousness they were feeling.

In any other circumstances, former AMA national president Dr [Bill Glasson](#) – a hero to some – would have been a shoo-in. Had he run as an Independent, he might, like Tony Windsor, have avalanched in.

But something was rotten in the state of Queensland and fifteen thousand calm, intelligent Brisbane people did not vote.

It's possible [the Corby release](#) story gave them pause. Here was a Queensland girl, who was – or may have been – guilty of something drug-related, about to make millions out of her 'confessions' in the way Americans do.

And it was a nice warm day for not voting, and for swimming instead, or eating grilled salmon with friends by the beach; and who, on a day like that, was keen to line up and vote for the LNP, a party as vain and foolish as [Enron](#), or [OneTel](#), or [Lehman Brothers](#).

No, the big news of yesterday was not how fifty-five thousand voted — but why fifteen thousand abstained.

They were not abstaining from the Rudd-

Gillard legacy.

They were abstaining from Abbott and Newman — who had promised much and let them down and told them that what they thought was a fair go was an '[age of entitlement](#)' about to end, and recoiling as well from the bad news that [Barnaby Joyce](#) didn't have the numbers [to help them](#) when they were down. Not now. [Not ever](#).

There might be another explanation, but this, I think, is the one that makes most sense.

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