

Can Labor win? It ain't gonna be easy but it ain't impossible either

By Martin Hirst

30 May 2016



A Shorten election victory is now looking more likely but it is not due to the figures alone — Turnbull himself looks defeated, writes [Dr Martin Hirst](#).

FOR THE LAST FEW days, I've been allowing myself to think that [Bill Shorten](#) can actually beat Turnbull – the "Fizza" – on July 2nd.

I know it's going to be tough. The odds are not necessarily in Bill's favour and we cannot underplay the significance of an all out "News Corpse" attack on [Labor](#) (ALP) over the next few weeks. We saw how successful this was in 2010 and 2013, and [Murdoch](#)'s hacks will pull out all stops to see Shorten defeated.

However, despite the obstacles, we could actually have a Labor government in the second half of 2016.

The math is not impossible, but it might take a few miracles.

In a way, perhaps I'm just channeling the late Bob Ellis. He [predicted a Shorten victory way back in December last year](#). At the time I was wishing but not hopeful. But now I am convinced Turnbull cannot win on 2 July.

A few handfuls of votes is all it takes

To be honest, the prospect of beating Malcolm and his fizzas comes down to a few handfuls of votes in some key swing seats. Labor has to take back 17 seats and this requires a swing of around 4% or a bit more. It's not impossible for this to happen.

NSW Seats	2013 % swing to Coalition	Change re party pro
Banks	3.28	2,00
Barton	7.1	50
Dobell	5.75	70
Eden-Monaro	4.85	50
Lindsay	4.11	3,00
Page	6.71	2,50
Reid	3.53	50
Robertson	4.0	3,50
Victoria Seats		
Corangamite	4.22	4,00
Deakin	3.78	2,60
La Trobe	5.67	4,00
QLD Seats		
Capricorn	4.45	1,60
Petrie	3.04	50
SA Seats		
Hindmarsh	7.97	2,00
Tasmania Seats		
Bass	10.78	3,00

Braddon	10.4	1,500 votes
Lyons	13.51	

[2015](#)
800 votes

A swing of just 1.7% would also give Labor the seat of Solomon in the Northern Territory. A swing of just 1.9% means that Labor also gains Hindmarsh in South Australia. Lyons is an interesting example because according to the [ABC's swingometer](#), a swing of just 1.4% to Labor would mean they win this seat. At 1.4% Labor would also win Capricornia and Petrie in Queensland.

When you break it down like this even a seat like Lyons in Tasmania is winnable for Labor if around 800 electors change their vote from the Coalition to Labor on a two-party preferred basis.

A gain of 2.7% in Braddon would give Labor its second Tasmanian seat. Only 2.8% and the NSW seat of Banks returns to Labor.

Take the swing to an even 3% and Labor wins nine seats including the bellwether of Eden-Monaro in NSW. Add just 0.3% to that and the seats of Robertson and Page (NSW) and Deakin (Victoria) return to Labor. At 3.4%, Labor gains Macarthur and Reid in NSW.

Macarthur would be the first seat to change hands in 2016 that was not held by Labor before the last election. In other words, it would be a loss for Turnbull, not a seat regained by the ALP. Significantly, a uniform swing of 3.4% to Labor would result in a nearly hung parliament.

Turnbull, Shorten and the next election, by Bob Ellis.
<https://t.co/nEaGPiC6qQ>

— IndependentAustralia (@independentaus) [December 13,](#)

Labor would have 71 seats, the Coalition 75 and four would be in the hands of independents. It is at this point that the 2016 election becomes very interesting.

A swing of 3.7% would give Labor its second steal from the Coalition, delivering Bonner (Queensland). It is worth noting that this would require about 4,000 people to switch their votes from 2013.

Is 3.8% the magic number?

Three-point-eight could be Shorten's magic number in 2016. With a swing of this magnitude the ALP would win Gilmore from the Coalition. At this point, Labor and the Coalition would each have 73 seats and the balance of power would be squarely with the independents and [Greens](#).

A 4% swing and the ALP wins Corangamite in Victoria and can form government in its own right with a comfortable two seat majority.

With a swing of 4.1% it is all over for the Coalition. The ALP picks up Bass (its third gain in Tasmania) and La Trobe in Victoria, giving it an unassailable six seat buffer in the lower house.

I called it a week ago
[#puttheliberalslast](#)
Labor will win
Turntoast flubbed it, even if he wins <https://t.co/vopaoEgOdG>
via [@canberratimes](#)

— Blair Rice (@ethicalmartini)
[May 22, 2016](#)

A swing greater than about 4.3% would see Labor win 20 seats in a landslide. The question really is to figure out if the ALP can get a swing of 4.3%. It is not impossible. The swing against Labor in 2013 was in the order of 4.5% and it would be difficult not to think that Turnbull is at least as unpopular as [Rudd](#) was three years ago.

Recent opinion polling [indicates](#) that Labor is on track to get the necessary swing and unseat the Coalition Government. The [mainstream media pundits say](#) Shorten needs 4.5% to gain the Treasury benches, so anything close to this would be pretty good for Labor.

A picture's worth a lot of words

Having spent a few hours doing the sums I am optimistic that Labor can win on 2 July but before I chewed on the math and the swingometer, I have felt confident for some time.

But it really struck me a couple of weeks ago when images of Malcolm looking irritable, tired, washed out, grim and miserable began to pepper my newsfeeds. Yes, some of these images are when Turnbull has been caught off guard but they are telling. He

looks like a man defeated.

I knew that Turnbull would have a reasonable honeymoon period with the mainstream media and that it would take some months for his shine to wear off. It's taken a while but we've reached that point. The rusted on "Abbottistas" in the News Corpse bunker are unhappy with Malcolm but are obliged to grit their teeth and back him, while secretly wishing for an Abbott return (not going to happen). For [Fairfax](#) and the [ABC](#), it's taken a while but their support for the Coalition is not a ringing endorsement.

Stop the rabid nonsense about asylum seekers, Mr Turnbull.
<https://t.co/7Gd04wLe kW pic.twitter.com/yHi8Qs zbcm>

— Urban Wronski (@UrbanWronski) [May 22, 2016](#)

Turnbull is unpopular; he comes across as a "toff" and out of touch and his cabinet is still dominated by Abbott's politics. The Turnbull reality is just as ugly as the Abbott reality. It's the same pig with new lipstick.

The honeymoon is

over, baby.

We have long passed the point where Turnbull could win in 2016 just by not being Tony Abbott. Beneath the glitter, smiles and plucked eyebrows, the Liberal Party is still the party of Howard and Abbott. Turnbull is leader only because just over half of the party room could no longer stomach the horror of a continuing Abbott/[Credlin](#) Government. Turnbull is not popular among the Liberals' hardcore [IPA](#)-lite membership and he is being actively undermined by the hard right factions across the nation.

There's no wonder then that he's not looking his best, is easily irritated and often seems like he just wants to retire to the Caymans and enjoy his [Mossack Fonseca](#) profits.

Bye bye, Malcolm.

Read more by [Martin Hirst](#) on his [blog Ethical Martini](#) and follow him on [Twitter @ethicalmartini](#).

Exclusive 7
News Reachtel
poll puts

Turnbull
Government in
losing position
in a must-win
marginal seat.
[@Riley7News](#)
<https://t.co/16lZcj0gKf>

— 7 News
Sydney (@7NewsSydney)
[May 20, 2016](#)

My gut feeling is that Turnbull I does not have the energy or the will to win this election . He's past it. He doesn't care enough. It's over.

—
Dave Donovan (@davrosz)
[May 28, 2016](#)

