



Crikey's
2010 Federal Election Night
Part 2



**Bumper
Party
Fun Bag!!**

Inside:

**Poll Bludger's
Marginal Seat
Cheatsheet**

**Your handy guide
to where the
swingers are!**

Your cut out and
Keep Crikey
Tipping Form
Guide Thingy!

**Poll Bludger's
Marginal
Seats Cheat
Sheet**

Electorate: Stirling

Margin: Liberal 1.2%

Location: Perth Northern Suburbs, Western Australia

In a nutshell: Combining Liberal-leaning coastal suburbs with Perth's least glamorous territory around Balga and Mirrabooka, this highly marginal seat has changed hands seven times in three decades. Shadow Customs Minister Michael Keenan nabbed the seat for the Liberals on the back of the 2004 Mark Latham backlash, and just managed to hold back the tide in 2007.

The candidates

CHRIS MARTIN
Greens

LOUISE DURACK
Labor (bottom)

ELIZABETH RE
Independent

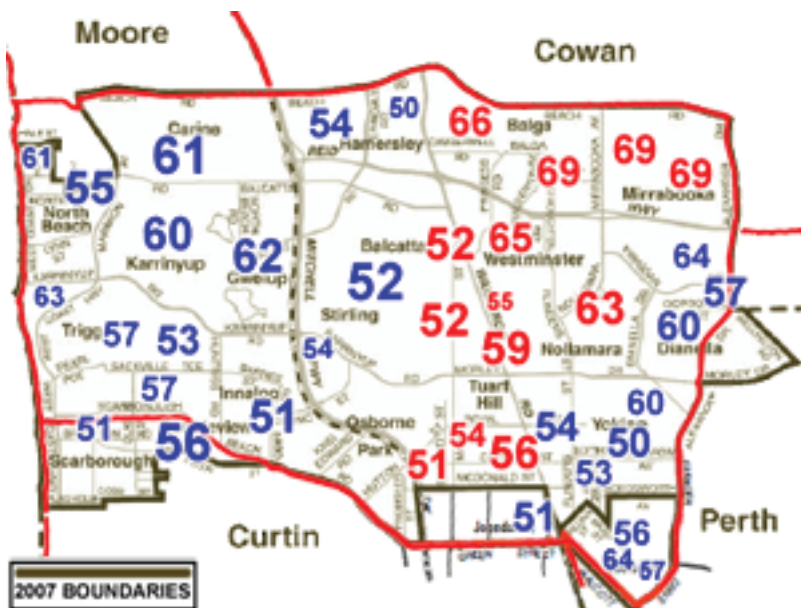
JENNY WHATELY
Christian Democratic Party

PETER CLIFFORD
Family First

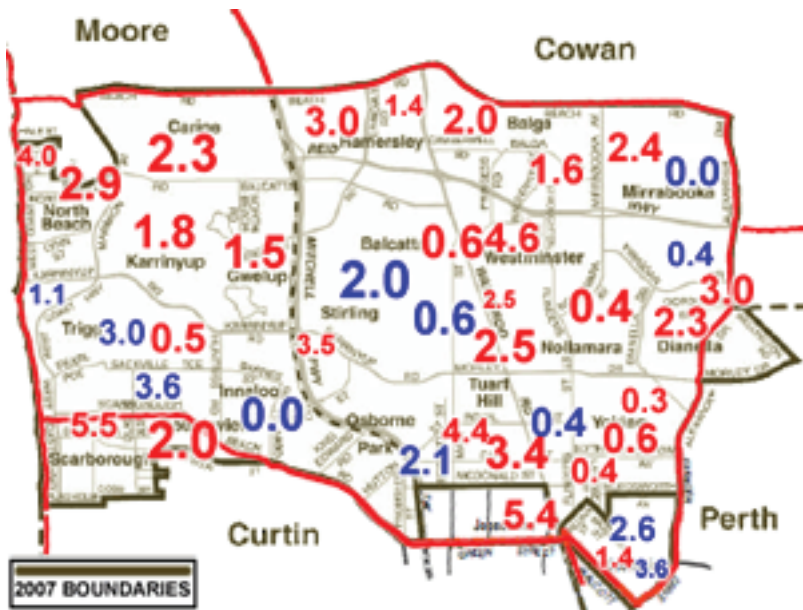
MICHAEL KEENAN
Liberal (top)



Two-party vote map



Swing % map



Electorate analysis:

The perennially marginal Perth northern suburbs seat of Stirling was created at the 1955 election to cater for post-war suburban expansion. Originally extending all the way inland to Guildford, it assumed roughly assumed its current dimensions following a redistribution in 1969. Subsequent growth in Perth's northern corridor has been accommodated by drawing in the once rural electorate of Moore, and through the creation of Cowan when parliament was enlarged in 1984. Stirling currently extends from northern Scarborough to North Beach along the coast, and inland through light industrial Balcatta and Osborne Park to low-income Balga and Mirrabooka in the north and more affluent Dianella and Yokine nearer the city. A number of minor adjustments have been made in the redistribution. In the north 1000 voters are gained in Watermans Bay, smoothing off what had previously been a southern coastal salient of Moore. In the south-east it gains Joondanna from Curtin (over 3000 voters) and Coolbinia from Perth (2700 voters). Counter-balancing these changes are transfers of nearly 7000 voters at southern Scarborough to Curtin and 1300 at western Morley to Perth. The areas gained and lost lean towards the Liberals in similar degree, such that the effect is a negligible 0.1 per cent reduction in the margin.

Stirling was held by Labor's Harry Webb for all but one term from its creation until 1972. The 1969 swing allowed Webb to retain a seat which had been made notionally Liberal by redistribution, but he was defeated when Western Australia bucked the national trend in 1972 (another Labor casualty being Forrest). Ian Viner held the seat for the Liberals from 1972 until 1983, surviving by 12 votes in 1974 and going on to serve as Aboriginal Affairs Minister in the Fraser government. It again changed hands with the election of the Hawke government in 1983, when Viner was defeated by Labor's Ron Edwards. Despite an unfavourable redistribution in 1984, Edwards held the seat by narrow margins at the next three elections, surviving by just 234 votes in 1990. He finally lost to prominent radio broadcaster Eoin Cameron when WA again bucked a national pro-Labor trend in 1993. Throughout this period the coastal suburbs assumed an older and more Liberal-friendly profile, but this was counterbalanced by a redistribution before the 1998 election which removed northern coastal Waterman, Marmion and Sorrento. Labor was thus able to regain the seat in 1998, when Cameron was defeated by Jann McFarlane.

Stirling changed hands for the third time in five elections in 2004, following another swing consistent with the statewide result. There were instructive variations in the swing within the electorate, with slight swings to Labor near the coast overwhelmed by a strong move to the Liberals further inland. The Liberals' success came despite the embarrassing withdrawal of their candidate Paul Afkos eight months earlier,

after it emerged he had borrowed \$300,000 from a man he knew to be a convicted drug trafficker. Afkos stood aside and was replaced by Michael Keenan, a real estate salesman, deputy director of the state party and former adviser to Amanda Vanstone and Alexander Downer. Keenan faced a strong opponent at the 2007 election in former SAS officer Peter Tinley, who was made a Member of the Order of Australia in 2003 for his service in Iraq and Afghanistan. However, the electorate stubbornly refused to budge, recording a gentle 0.8 per cent swing to Labor that compared with a statewide swing of 2.1 per cent. Tinley went on to enter state politics at the November 2009 by-election for Willagee, held to replace former Premier Alan Carpenter.

Michael Keenan was elevated to the front bench after the election, assuming the positions of Shadow Assistant Treasurer and Shadow Minister for Superannuation and Corporate Governance. He was subsequently associated with a new faction forming around Malcolm Turnbull, which seems to have been borne out by his career trajectory since. On Turnbull's elevation to the leadership he was promoted to the significant employment and workplace relations portfolio, but the change to Tony Abbott brought him back down a peg to justice and customs. Sharri Markson of the Sunday Telegraph reported in April 2009 that Keenan was among those unfortunately dubbed the "big swinging dicks" who were said to have agitated for the removal of Julie Bishop as deputy leader, a grouping also said to have included Christopher Pyne, Steven Ciobo, Greg Hunt, Peter Dutton, Jamie Briggs and Scott Morrison.

Labor's candidate at the coming election is Louise Durack, executive director of People With Disabilities WA and unsuccessful candidate for Ocean Reef at the 2008 state election. Durack won preselection with the backing of the party's national executive ahead of television presenter Janet Pettigrew, said to have been the favourite among local party branches, and WA Aids Council official Cipri Martinez. Robert Taylor of The West Australian had earlier tipped the nomination would go to Karen Brown, chief-of-staff to state Opposition Leader Eric Ripper and unsuccessful state election candidate for Mount Lawley.

Stirling was one of four Perth marginals covered by a Galaxy survey of 800 respondents in the second last week of the campaign, and it showed a 2.1 per cent swing against Labor across the four.

Electorate: Hasluck

Margin: Labor 1.0%

Location: Perth Eastern Suburbs, Western Australia

In a nutshell: This Perth eastern suburbs seat has had a brief but exciting history: won for Labor by Sharryn Jackson in 2001, lost by her to Liberal candidate Stuart Henry in 2004, and recovered by her again in 2007. Labor thought the seat gone for all money at the height of the mining tax imbroglio, but by all accounts the contest is now back on.

The candidates

GLENICE SMITH
Greens

ANDREW MIDDLETON
Climate Sceptics

JIM McCOURT
Family First

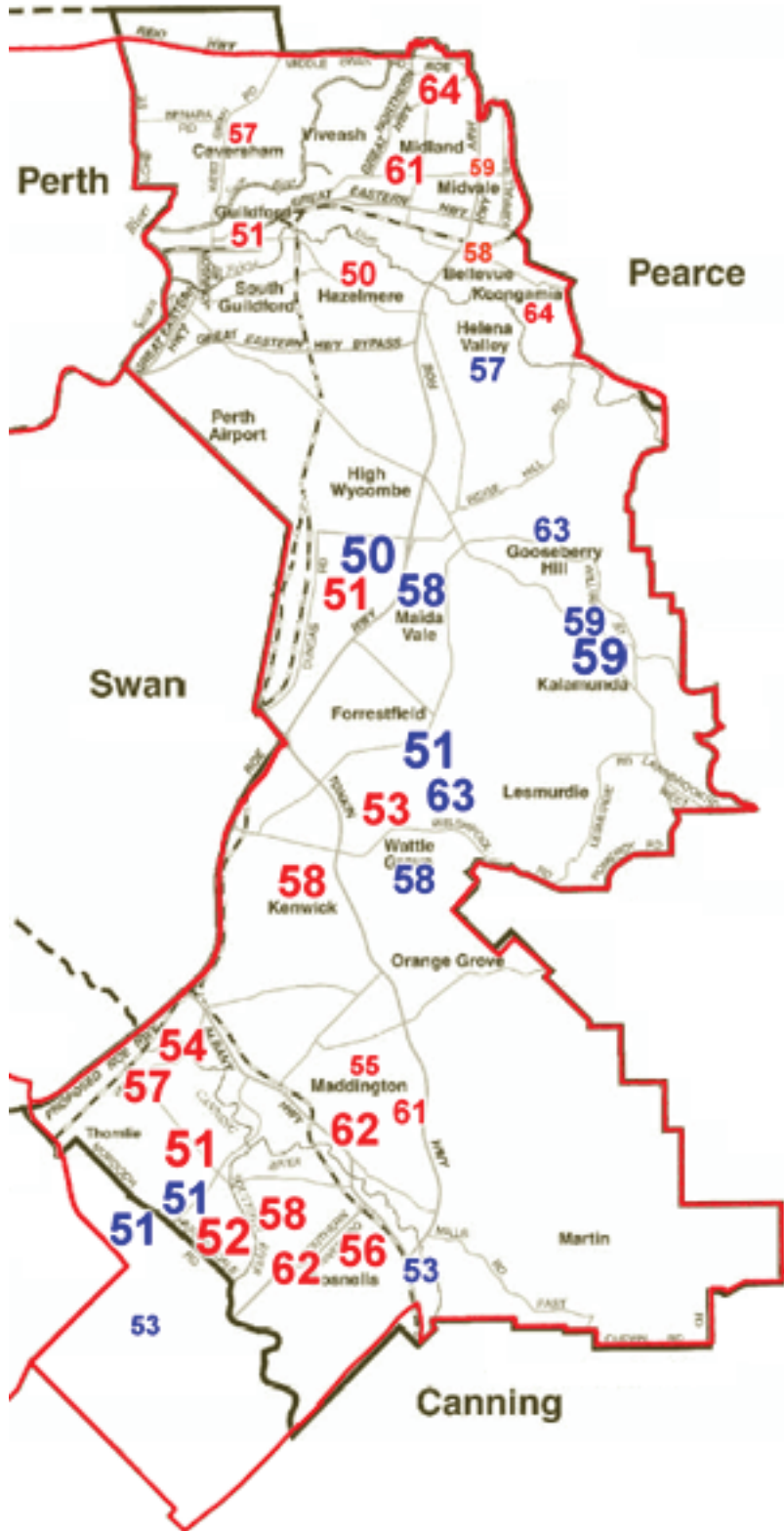
KEN WYATT
Liberal (bottom)

SHARRYN JACKSON
Labor (top)

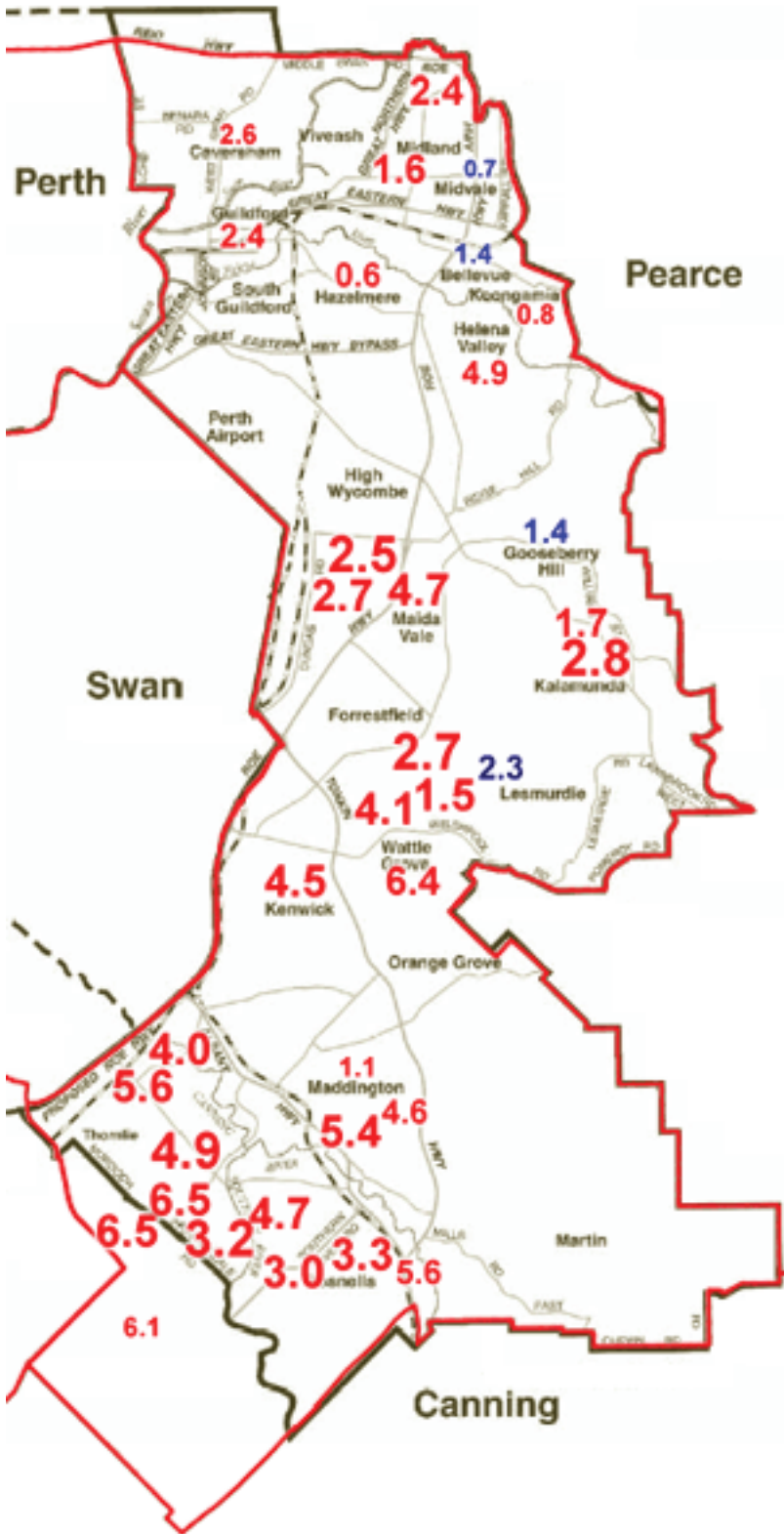
DOT HENRY
Independent



Two-party vote map



Swing % map



Electorate analysis:

Located in Perth's eastern suburbs, Hasluck was created when Western Australia gained its fifteenth seat at the 2001 election, from territory that had previously been in Perth, Tangney and Swan. It consists of three discrete population areas which lean to Labor in the north and south, and to the Liberals in the centre. The northern area includes Midland, home to a high proportion of elderly voters, rent payers and low-income earners, and the more Liberal-friendly Guildford, which is demographically unremarkable on all measures. The central area includes middle-income suburbs around Kalamunda in the Darling Scarp, home to a large number of English migrants, as well as mortgage-sensitive Forrestfield and Maida Vale nearer the city. The southern suburbs of Gosnells, Thornlie and Maddington are marked by lower levels of income and home ownership. The redistribution has added over 9000 voters at the southern end of the electorate, in an area covering Southern River and the balance of Thornlie and Huntingdale.

Hasluck had a notional Labor margin of 2.6 per cent going into the 2001 election, at which the Liberals achieved an insufficient swing of 0.6 per cent. The inaugural member was Sharryn Jackson, who had worked for 15 years as an official with the Left faction Liquor Hospitality and Miscellaneous Workers Union. Jackson was seen off by a 3.6 per cent swing to the Liberals at the 2004 election, part of an allergic reaction to Mark Latham throughout the suburbs of Perth. Labor managed to pick up swings in a few of the wealthier booths around Kalamunda, but this was swamped by a substantial shift to the Liberals in low-income and mortgage-paying areas.

The incoming Liberal member was Stuart Henry, former executive director of the Western Australian Master Plumbers Association. Jackson meanwhile quickly established that her political career was an ongoing concern, being elected state president of the ALP in November 2005. When Kim Beazley lost the leadership in December 2006 it was reported that the LHMWU was urging Jackson to contest his seat of Brand, but she declared herself set on recovering Hasluck and was duly preselected there. Jackson won the seat back at the ensuing election with a swing of 3.1 per cent, 1.0 per cent higher than the statewide result, partly offsetting Labor's loss of the Perth seats of Cowan and Swan. The swing was particularly strong in the south of the electorate, more subdued in the centre, and barely registered in the north.

The Liberals have nominated Ken Wyatt, Office of Aboriginal Health director and uncle of Ben Wyatt, a rising star of the state Labor Party. It was reported last year that the nod might go to former WA Police Union president Mike Dean, who had been courted by both parties. He decided not to proceed citing personal issues, saying he might yet pursue a career in state politics.

In the second week of the campaign Labor promised to provide \$480 million of \$600 million sought by the Western Australian government to improve roads around Perth Airport, which will include widening Tonkin Highway to a six-lane freeway. There was also an as-yet-uncosted promise to provide funding to an upgrade of 4 kilometres of Great Eastern Highway.

Even before the mining tax was announced, Labor internal polling was said to have it in a "disastrous" position, but recent published polling has been encouraging for Labor. After the leadership change Morgan surveyed 200 voters in the electorate and found the Liberal swing to be 1.0 per cent, putting the seat right on the edge. However, the small sample was such that the margin of error on the poll was a hefty 7 per cent. In the first week of the campaign Westpoll surveyed 400 voters and found Labor on 47 per cent of the primary vote and 54 per cent on two-party preferred, with a margin of error of 5 per cent. The following week The West Australian reported Labor internal polling had it at 50-50. In the second last week of the election Hasluck was one of four Perth marginals covered by a Galaxy survey of 800 respondents, and it showed a 2.1 per cent swing against Labor across the four.

Electorate: Swan

Margin: Labor 0.3%*

Location: Inner Southern Perth, Western Australia

* Liberal seat made notionally Labor by redistribution

In a nutshell: With affluent riverside suburbs in the west balancing safe Labor areas in the east, electorates don't come much more exciting than Swan, which Labor retained by 114 votes in 2004 and lost by 164 votes in 2007. The mining tax controversy suggested it was unlikely to be quite so close this time around, but the leadership change and ensuing policy adjustments may have made things interesting again.

The candidates

TIM HAMMOND

Labor (bottom)

JOE LOPEZ

Socialist Equality Party

REBECCA LEIGHTON

Greens

STEVE KLOMP

Christian Democratic Party

BARRY DRENNAN

Family First

STEVE IRONS

Liberal (top)

BRET TREASURE

Australian Sex Party



Electorate analysis:

Swan is one of the two Western Australian seats which bucked the national trend by going from Labor to Liberal at the 2007 election, the other being Cowan. It took only a 0.2 per cent swing to make the difference, with Labor winning by 114 votes in 2004 and Liberal winning by 164 in 2007. The electorate is bounded to the north by the Swan River and to the west and south by the Canning River, extending from South Perth and Como north-eastwards through Victoria Park to Belmont, and eastwards through Bentley to Cannington.

There is a sharp electoral distinction in Swan between the affluent and strongly Liberal-voting west of the electorate, and its lower-income, Labor-voting east. This is reflected in the corresponding state seats of South Perth and Victoria Park, which are respectively safe Liberal and safe Labor. The redistribution has added Fernwood, Lynwood and Langford south of the Canning River, which is a Labor-leaning area despite having previously been in safe Liberal Tangney. This has shifted the margin 0.7 per cent in Labor's favour, resulting in a notional Labor margin of 0.3 per cent.

Swan in its present form is unrecognisable as the seat that was created at federation, which covered the state's non-metropolitan south-west. It was drawn into the metropolitan area when parliament was enlarged in 1949, at which point it continued to cover the eastern suburbs as far north as Midland, and has since shrunk westwards into the area defined by the rivers. The inaugural member for Swan was John Forrest, explorer, colonial Premier, federation founding father and senior minister in early non-Labor governments. Labor first won the seat when Forrest died in 1918, but it fell to the Country Party soon afterwards and for the next half-century was won by Labor only in 1943 and 1954. Adrian Bennett won the seat for Labor in 1969 and held it until his defeat in 1975 by Liberal candidate John Martyr, who in turn lost the seat in 1980.

Labor's new member was 32-year-old Kim Beazley Jr, future party leader and son of the Whitlam government Education Minister and long-serving Fremantle MP Kim Beazley Sr. Beazley strengthened his hold on the seat with consecutive swings of 8.1 per cent and 8.6 per cent in 1980 and 1983. The subsequent loss of the inner eastern area around Bassendean to Perth in 1984 cut 4.1 per cent from the margin, which was further whittled away by sharp swings in 1984 and 1990. By now a senior minister, Beazley began casting around for a safer seat after surviving the 1993 election by 294 votes. A safety hatch opened when Wendy Fatin retired in the somewhat safer seat of Brand at the 1996 election, which Beazley was nonetheless able to retain by just 387 votes.

Swan meanwhile fell to Liberal candidate Don Randall, who was tipped out by a 6.4 per cent swing in 1998 before returning in 2001 as the member for Canning. The new Labor member for Swan was former farmer and prison officer Kim Wilkie, who had his margin whittled to almost nothing over the next two elections. He was considerably assisted in 2004 by the troubles of Liberal candidate Andrew Murfin, who was hit by revelations his campaign office had written a bogus letter to local newspapers in the name of an elderly local Salvation Army member. That the seat bucked the swing at the 2007 election can presumably be put down a correction following the Liberals' under-performance in 2004.

The victorious Liberal candidate was Steve Irons, proprietor of an air-conditioning business and former league footballer. Irons was one of the minority of Western Australian Liberal MPs who did not cause trouble for Malcolm Turnbull – he spoke in the party room in favour of supporting emissions trading scheme legislation, and was believed to have backed Turnbull over Abbott in December 2009 leadership vote. He gained publicity at the time of the Prime Minister's apology to victims of abuse in church or state care in November 2009, having himself been a state ward in Victoria as a child.

Labor's candidate for the coming election is Tim Hammond, formerly a lawyer for Slater & Gordon who won preselection without opposition. State Labor MPs John Quigley and Ben Wyatt claimed in July 2009 that former WA Police Union president Mike Dean had expressed an interest in the seat, but he instead joined the Liberal Party and was spoken of as its possible candidate for Hasluck.

In the second week of the campaign Labor promised to provide \$480 million of \$600 million sought by the Western Australian government to improve roads around Perth Airport, which will include widening Tonkin Highway to a six-lane freeway. There was also an as-yet-uncosted promise to provide funding to an upgrade of 4 kilometres of Great Eastern Highway.

Swan was one of four Perth electorates polled by Westpoll during the first week of the campaign, which collectively suggested the anticipated swing to the Liberals had evaporated. However, the result for Swan individually had the Liberals leading 52-48, from primary votes of 47 per cent Liberal, 37 per cent Labor and 10 per cent Greens. This was from a sample of about 400, with a margin of error of 5 per cent. The following week The West Australian reported Labor internal polling had it at 50-50. In the second last week of the campaign Swan was one of four Perth marginals covered by a Galaxy survey of 800 respondents, and it showed a 2.1 per cent swing against Labor across the four.

Electorate: Bass

Margin: Labor 1.0%

Location: Launceston/North-Eastern Regional, Tasmania

Outgoing member: Jodie Campbell (Labor)

In a nutshell: Famed for Labor's devastating 1975 by-election defeat which helped precipitate the downfall of the Whitlam government, Bass has scarcely been less interesting in recent times, changing hands five times since 1993. Yet another layer of interest has been added at the coming election by the retirement of Labor's winner in 2007, Jodie Campbell, after just one term.

The candidates

STEVE TITMUS
Liberal (bottom)

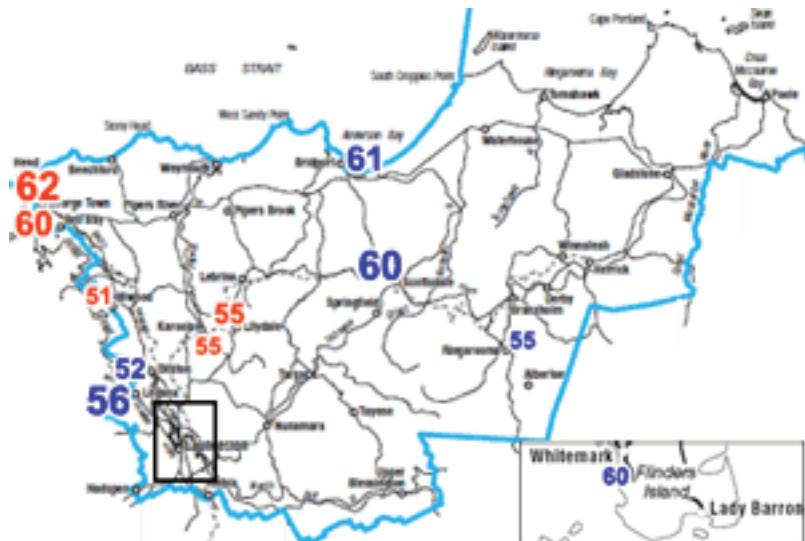
GEOFF LYONS
Labor (top)

SANCIA COLGRAVE
Greens

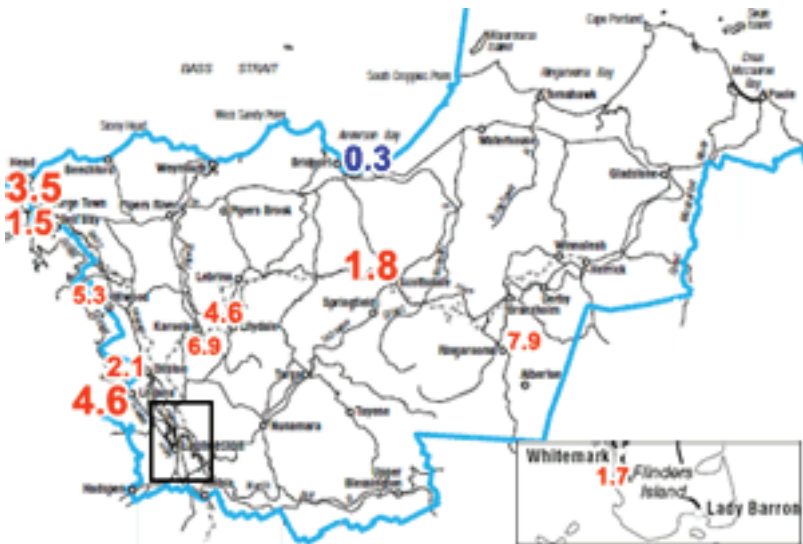
ADRIAN WATTS
Citizens Electoral Council



Two-party vote map



Swing % map



Electorate analysis:

Still famous for the 1975 by-election that provided a catalyst for the Coalition's decision to block supply in the Senate, Bass has been an arm wrestle ever since. Amid the statewide realignments to the Liberals in the 1980s and Labor over the past decade, Bass has remained relatively stable. It has changed hands at five of the last six elections, the only interruption being with Labor's consecutive clean sweeps of Tasmania in 1998 and 2001. The record will extend to the coming election regardless of who wins, as Labor's victor of 2007, Jodie Campbell, is bowing out after a brief and troubled parliamentary career.

Bass has been little changed since it was created with Tasmania's division into single-member electorates in 1903, having been frozen into Launceston and the state's north-eastern corner by the constitutional requirement that states have no fewer than five seats. The current redistribution has added about 1600 new voters at Hadspen and Franklin Valley, previously in Lyons (its only neighbour), without altering the margin. Launceston provides the electorate with about 70 per cent of its 70,000 enrolled voters; other centres include George Town, a Labor-voting coastal town at the mouth of the Tamar River, and the more conservative Scottsdale, a hub of surrounding timber and farming communities.

The 2001 and 2004 elections showed little distinction in voting behaviour between Launceston and the remainder (the respective two-party vote for the Liberals in 2004 was 52.4 per cent and 53.6 per cent), but a gap opened up in 2007 with a 4.5 per cent Labor swing in Launceston compared with 0.2 per cent elsewhere. Within Launceston, the North Esk River that runs through the city from east to west serves as a boundary between strong Labor territory in the north (Labor two-party booth results were in the 60s in 2007) and more conservative suburbs in the south and west.

Labor first won Bass when the 1910 election delivered it its first-ever parliamentary majority, and lost it six years later when member Jens Jensen followed Billy Hughes into the Nationalist Party. Jensen retained the seat as a Nationalist at the 1917 election, and it remained with the party after he lost endorsement in 1919. Labor's next win came with the election of Jim Scullin's government in 1929, but it was again lost to a party split when member Allan Guy followed Joseph Lyons into the United Australia Party in 1931. Guy was re-elected as the UAP candidate at that year's election, but was defeated by Labor's Claude Barnard in 1934.

The next change came with the election of the Menzies government in 1949, when Barnard lost to Liberal candidate Bruce Kekwick. It returned to the Barnard family fold when Claude's son Lance defeated Kekwick in 1954, going on to serve as deputy prime minister in the Whitlam government from 1972 to 1974. The famed 1975 by-election followed Barnard's mid-term resignation, ostensibly on grounds of ill health, but following a year on from his loss of the deputy position to Jim Cairns. A plunge in the Labor primary vote from 54.0 per cent to 36.5 per cent delivered the seat to Liberal candidate Kevin Newman (husband of future Senator Jocelyn and father of current Brisbane lord mayor Campbell), emboldening the Coalition to pursue an early election at all costs.

Bass remained in the Liberal fold for 18 years, as Tasmania bucked the national trend to Labor in 1983 due to the Franklin dam controversy. Kevin Newman was succeeded in 1990 by Warwick Smith, whose promising career progress was twice stymied by the vagaries of electoral fortune. In 1993 he lost the seat to Labor's Sylvia Smith by just 40 votes, part of a statewide swing to Labor that gave the first indication on election night that things were not going according to script. Warwick Smith recovered the seat in 1996 and served as Family Services Minister in the first term of the Howard government, while Sylvia Smith returned to politics a year later as an independent member in the state upper house. The 1998 election produced a second GST backlash and another painfully narrow defeat for Warwick Smith, this time by 78 votes at the hands of 30-year-old Miscellaneous Workers Union official Michelle O'Byrne.

Labor repeated its 1998 clean sweep of Tasmania in 2001, but came disastrously unstuck in 2004 when Mark Latham's policy on logging of old-growth forests provoked the wrath of the CFMEU, Premier Paul Lennon and Lyons MP Dick Adams. Vision of the Prime Minister being cheered by timber workers at Tasmania

Launceston's Albert Hall provided one of the main talking points of the campaign's decisive final days. Both Bass and its still more logging-dependent neighbour Braddon fell to the Liberals, whose candidate Michael Ferguson overhauled the 2.0 per cent margin with a 4.5 per cent swing. O'Byrne entered state politics at the March 2006 election, recording exceptionally strong personal votes in 2006 and 2010.

Ferguson was unable to repeat his coup at the 2007 election, when the seat again captured national attention owing to Environment Minister Malcolm Turnbull's conditional approval to Gunns Limited's proposed Tamar Valley pulp mill north of Launceston. Local opinion in Bass was said to be divided between hopes of job creation and fears of the impact on the water supply, and the seat accordingly recorded a 3.6 per cent swing broadly in line with the statewide trend. This was 1.0 per cent more than the existing margin for Ferguson, who also found refuge in state politics when he won one of the Liberals' two seats in Bass at the March 2010 election.

Jodie Campbell came to parliament via the Australian Services Union, Launceston City Council and an association with a breakaway sub-faction of the Left called the Progressive Policy Forum, associated with sister-and-brother state MPs Michelle and David O'Byrne. Campbell twice made the news in mid-2009 when her partner was charged with assaulting her, and two of her staff members abruptly and mysteriously resigned. It was reported at the time that the former event had halted a "gathering momentum" that would have cost Campbell preselection, and that she remained "under pressure to lift her performance". Campbell confirmed her decision not to contest the next election four months later.

At the time doubts were first raised about Campbell's long-term future in politics, Matthew Denholm of *The Australian* noted that "while Ms Campbell is from Labor's Left faction, many in the Right see Bass as their seat". Loretta Johnston of the *Launceston Examiner* reported in January that a decision by the Right not to challenge the Left over the succession to Duncan Kerr in the federal seat of Denison indicated a deal has been struck that would leave Bass clear for Geoff Lyons, a staffer to Right faction Senator Helen Polley and former manager at Launceston General Hospital. Danielle Blewett of *The Examiner* surprisingly offered word from "Labor sources" that Kevin Rudd had "made it clear he wanted a man to run for Bass after the recent distress experienced by incumbent Bass MHR Jodie Campbell". Two women were nonetheless named at different stages as possible successors: Kathryn Hay, a state member for Bass from 2002 until her surprise early retirement in 2006, and Michelle Cripps, North Tasmanian Development consultant and state candidate from 2010. Also named was Winnaleah District High School principal Brian Wightman, who instead went on to win one of Labor's two seats in Bass at the state election. Lyons ended up getting the nod as anticipated in a decision imposed on the local party in April by the national executive.

The Liberal preselection initially loomed as a contest between Brigadier Andrew Nikolic, veteran of numerous overseas postings and until recently the Australian Defence Force's director-general of public affairs, and Senator Guy Barnett, who would otherwise have had to settle for the slightly less appealing number three position on the Liberal Senate ticket. However, Nikolic withdrew from contention in July last year citing family and work issues, and nothing further was heard of the Barnett proposal. Into the breach stepped Steve Titmus, a former television news reader and PR consultant for local favourites Gunns Ltd.

In the second week of the campaign Labor promised \$11.5 million in funding for Launceston's flood levees as part of the Natural Disaster Resilience Program.

A statewide EMRS poll conducted late in the second last week of the campaign showed Labor's vote holding up in Tasmania, and it included a small-sample (200) breakdown for Bass which had Geoff Lyons leading 57-43.

Electorate: Cowper

Margin: Nationals 1.2%

Location: North Coast, New South Wales

In a nutshell: Cowper has only been held by Labor for one term in a history going back to federation, but growing urbanisation along the New South Wales north coast has underwritten a long-term trend in their favour. Paul Sefky fell 1.2 per cent short of winning the seat for Labor from Nationals member Luke Hartsuyker in 2007, and is hoping to go one better this time.

The candidates

PAUL SEFKY
Labor (bottom)

DOMINIC KING
Greens

JOHN ARKAN
Independent

DEBORAH LIONS
Christian Democratic Party

LUKE HARTSUYKER
Nationals (top)



Electorate analysis:

Cowper covered most of the length of the New South Wales north coast when it was created at federation, but it has shrunk over time into the area around Coffs Harbour. It currently extends north to Brooms Head and Maclean and south to Kempsey, and has undergone only negligible change with the redistribution.

The seat was held for an epic 42 years by Earle Page, who was elected as candidate of the Farmers and Settlers Party in 1918, became a founding father of the Country Party in 1920, and served for three weeks as Prime Minister in 1939 after the death of Joseph Lyons. Page contested the 1961 election despite being 81 and suffering from lung cancer, from which he died 11 days later without knowing he had finally lost his seat. The successful Labor candidate was Frank McGuren, who had achieved consecutive double digit swings as candidate in 1958 and 1961. McGuren was unable to repeat his feat in 1963 and the seat soon returned to its safe Country Party ways, despite close calls in 1972 (2.5 per cent) and 1983 (2.1 per cent).

Current member Luke Hartsuyker came to the seat when Garry Nehl retired at the 2001 election, at which he outpolled a Liberal candidate 29.9 per cent to 15.9 per cent. In 2004 he picked up a 1.7 per cent swing, leaving him enough fat to survive a 5.5 per cent swing to Labor in 2007. After the election defeat he was promoted to the junior shadow ministry in the consumer affairs portfolio. His Labor opponent at the coming election is training consultant Paul Sefky, making his third tilt at the seat after falling short in 1998 and 2007.t

Electorate: Hughes

Margin: Liberal 0.9%

Location: Outer Southern Sydney, New South Wales

Outgoing member: Danna Vale (Liberal)

In a nutshell: Hughes drifted over the years from being reasonably safe Labor to reasonably safe Liberal, but successive redistributions have put it back on the map. The retirement of Danna Vale gives Labor their best chance since she took the seat off them in 1996.

The candidates

PETER BUSSA
One Nation

CRAIG KELLY
Liberal (top)

SUSAN ROBERTS
Greens

STAN HURLEY
Family First

SCOTT NAILON
Christian Democratic Party

DON NGUYEN
Liberal Democrats

BRENT THOMAS
Labor (bottom)



Electorate analysis:

Hughes covers outer southern Sydney, including Sunderland, Menai and parts of Sutherland Shire to the east of the Holsworthy military reserve, and an area including Chipping Norton and Warwick Farm to its west. The redistribution has strengthened Labor by adding 22,500 voters from Revesby Heights north to Milperra, previously in safe Labor Banks, while detaching Heathcote and Waterfall to Cunningham along with smaller transfers to Cook and Fowler.

Much was made of the Coalition's dominance in Hughes during the Howard years, as it had only previously been won by the Liberals in 1966 in a history going back to 1955. Danna Vale won the seat from embattled Keating government Aboriginal Affairs Minister Robert Tickner in 1996 with a massive 11.4 per cent swing, and increased her majority over the next three elections. That a swing was achieved in 1998 was especially remarkable, although Vale might have been aided by Labor candidate David Hill, the former ABC managing director who had been head of Sydney Water at the time of that year's water contamination crisis.

Hughes has moved back into contention as a result of two successive redistributions, with the town centre of Liverpool being added at the 2007 election, and the inevitable swing in 2007, which cut Vale's margin from 8.6 per cent to 2.2 per cent. Vale is retiring at the coming election and will be succeeded as Liberal candidate by Craig Kelly, founder of the Southern Sydney Retailers Association and former first grade rugby union candidate. Labor's candidate is Brent Thomas, a solicitor and former chief-of-staff to state government minister Carl Scully.

Craig Kelly won Liberal preselection in a local branch vote ahead of Peter Colacino, a 28-year-old infrastructure policy expert who reportedly had the backing of Danna Vale, and Sutherland Shire councillor Kent Johns. Brent Thomas won Labor preselection with backing from the Right, but had to fight off factional colleague Greg Holland as well as Liverpool mayor Wendy Waller, mentioned as a possible candidate of the Left. Glenn Milne in *The Australian* reported that Thomas was supported by head office, which enlisted the support of the Ferguson Left in exchange for its support for Laurie Ferguson in Werriwa.

Half way through the campaign, Phillip Coorey of the *Sydney Morning Herald* report internal polling had the Liberals believing that despite being strong overall in New South Wales, they were "in trouble" in Hughes. However, Patricia Karvelas of *The Australian* reported a week later that the Liberals believed they would keep the seat "easily". At around that time the seat was one of four being covered by a Galaxy survey of western Sydney marginals targeting 200 respondents per electorate, which collectively showed a swing against Labor of 3.9 per cent.

Electorate: Paterson

Margin: Liberal 0.6%

Location: Hunter Region, New South Wales

In a nutshell: Paterson changed hands regularly in the past, but Liberal member Bob Baldwin has carried the seat into opposition after strong performances in 2004 and 2007. The slender margin is tantalisingly within Labor's reach, but Baldwin's local popularity and the weight of older voters in the electorate will make it a tough nut to crack.

The candidates



BOB BALDWIN
Liberal



JIM ARNEMAN
Labor

Electorate analysis:

Paterson covers the New South Wales north coast from Port Stephens inland to East Maitland, and north to Foster-Tuncurry on the coast. Labor is strong in and around East Maitland, but the remainder of the electorate is solidly conservative, particularly the rural areas. According to George Megalogenis's demographic tables prepared for the 2007 election, it ranked fourth in the country for voters over 55 and seventeenth last for median household income. A seat bearing the name first existed between 1949 and 1984, but it was oriented further to the north and west, taking in Maitland, Muswellbrook and Scone. The current incarnation of the electorate has been coastally oriented since it was created in 1993.

The redistribution has removed 3800 voters in the dairying region of Gloucester inland of Foster-Toncurry to Lyne, and adjusted its southern boundaries with Hunter in Maitland (adding Hillsborough and Maitland Vale on the northern bank of the Hunter along with a sliver of East Maitland, amounting to 2200 voters) and Newcastle (removing a small area around Duckenfield). The changes are favourable to Labor at both ends, reducing the margin from 1.5 per cent to 0.6 per cent.

Paterson has changed hands three times since 1993 between Labor's Bob Horne (winner in 1993 and 1998) and the Liberals' Bob Baldwin (1996, 2001 and 2004). Baldwin's win in 2001 was assisted by a redistribution which added Forster and Tuncurry, resulting in a 2.5 per cent shift that made the seat notionally Liberal. In 2004 Baldwin faced an opponent other than Bob Horne for the first time, and enjoyed his first comfortable win following an evenly distributed 5.5 per cent swing that was not replicated in neighbouring electorates. This gave Baldwin enough of a buffer to survive a 4.8 per cent swing to Labor in 2007. Baldwin was promoted to parliamentary secretary in January 2006, and to Shadow Defence Science and Personnel Minister after the election defeat. He opposed Malcolm Turnbull in his leadership contests with Brendan Nelson and Tony Abbott.

Labor has again nominated its unsuccessful candidate from 2007, Health Services Union organiser and former ambulance officer Jim Arneman, who was also narrowly defeated in his bid to succeed a retiring Labor member in Port Stephens at the March 2007 state election.

Electorate: Macarthur

Margin: Labor 0.1%*

Location: Outer South-Western Sydney, New South Wales

Outgoing member: Pat Farmer (Liberal)

* Liberal seat made notional Labor by redistribution

In a nutshell: Macarthur once had a record as a bellwether to put Eden-Monaro to shame, but redistributions and the outer suburbs' enthusiasm for John Howard fortified it enough to withstand a huge swing in 2007. The Liberals' position going into the election has been weakened by redistribution and the looming departure of sitting member Pat Farmer, but the asylum seeker issue and collateral damage from the state government gives them grounds for optimism.

The candidates

KATE McCULLOCH
One Nation

NICK BLEASDALE
Labor (top)

DOMENIC CAMMARERI
Building Australia

RUSSELL MATHESON
Liberal (bottom)

NOLENE NORSWORTHY
Christian Democratic Party

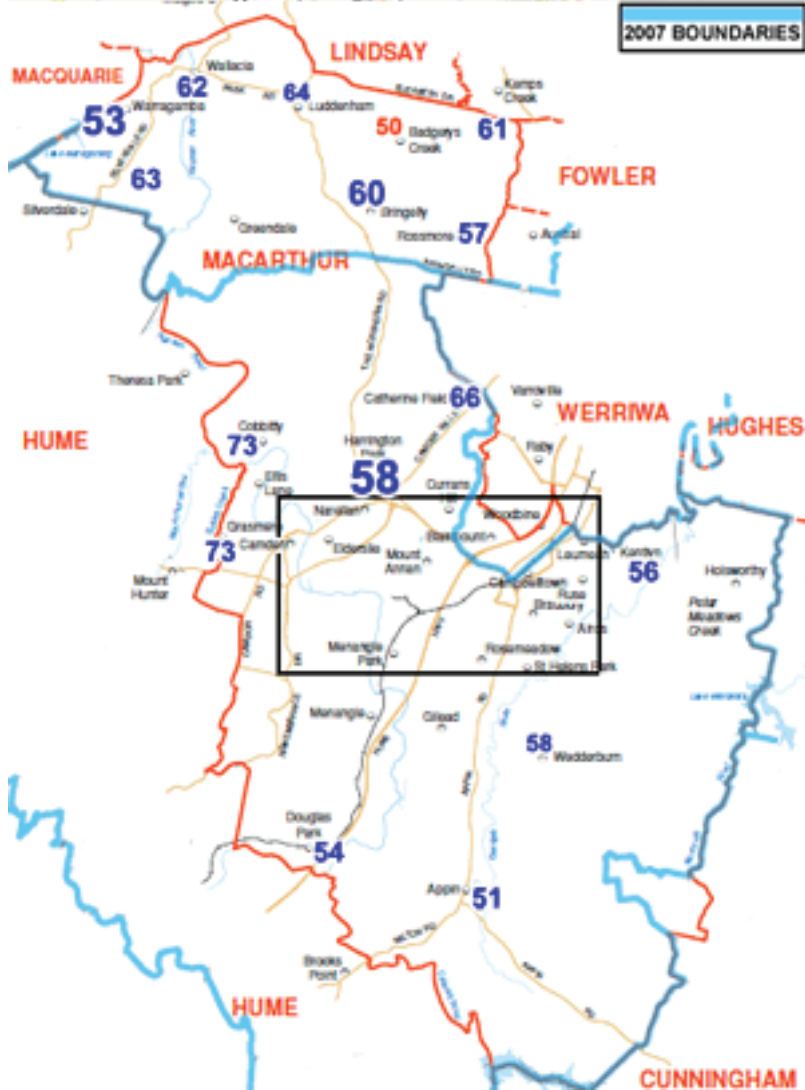
JESSICA DI BLASIO
Greens

CLINTON MEAD
Democrats

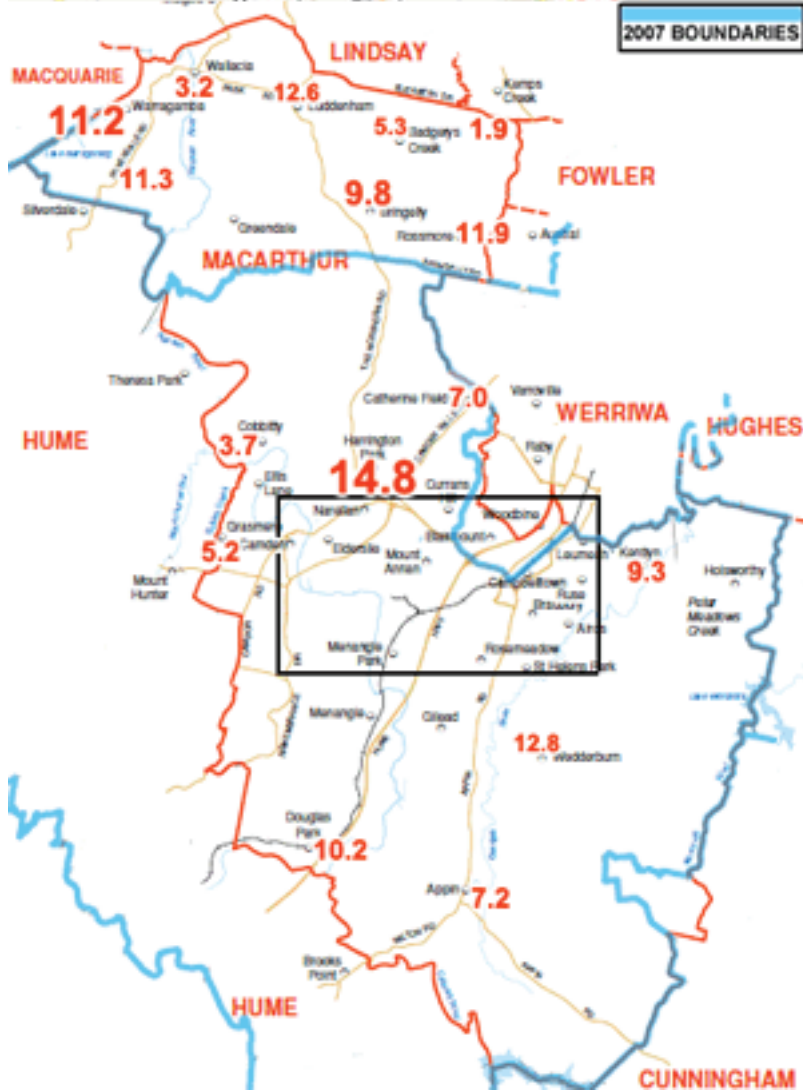
GRANT HERBERT
Family First



Two-party vote map



Swing % map



Electorate analysis:

Centred on the south-western Sydney exurb of Campbelltown, Macarthur had an even better record as a bellwether electorate than Eden-Monaro, being carried by the election-winning party on each occasion since its creation in 1949, until Liberal member Pat Farmer finally bucked the trend by retaining the seat in 2007. An area of rapidly developing urbanisation, the seat has been heavily affected by recent redistributions: it moved out of Illawarra in 1993 and into booming Campbelltown in 2001, respectively to the advantage of Liberal and Labor. At the 2007 election it exchanged Badgerys Creek in the north for rural territory beyond Sydney's outskirts, which has been largely reversed by the current redistribution while also adding new urban territory in the north of Campbelltown. Both the Badgerys Creek area gained from Fowler and the rural areas lost to Hume are strong for the conservatives, but the latter is more so, such that its loss has turned a 0.7 per cent Liberal margin into 0.1 per cent Labor.

Macarthur was held for the Liberals throughout the 1949-72 government by Jeff Bate, who ran as an independent in 1972 after losing preselection. The seat then passed to John Kerin through the Whitlam years and Michael Baume under Malcolm Fraser, respectively to return following their defeats in Werriwa in 1978 and the Senate in 1984. Chris Hollis won for Labor when Bob Hawke came to power in 1983, before moving to the new seat of Throsby in 1984. Stephen Martin then held the seat until 1993, when he moved to Cunningham after redistribution slashed the margin. Chris Haviland held the seat for Labor in 1993 but lost his endorsement going into the 1996 election, at which former Premier John Fahey gained the seat for the Liberals with an emphatic 12.0 per cent swing.

The redistribution before the 2001 election produced a notional Labor margin of 1.7 per cent, prompting Fahey to cast around for another seat. His preferred destination was Hume, which caused friction with its sitting member Alby Schultz. Fahey was ultimately compelled to retire on health grounds, and new Liberal candidate Pat Farmer performed outstandingly to hold the seat with a swing of 8.7 per cent. Farmer was a former ultra-marathon runner noted for the 15,000 kilometre charity run round Australia after his wife died of heart failure. After consolidating his hold on Macarthur with a 2.5 per cent swing in 2004, Farmer went into the 2007 election with an 11.1 per cent margin. He ended up needing every bit of it, suffering a swing of 10.4 per cent.

Farmer will bow out at the coming election after losing preselection to Russell Matheson, a police sergeant and former mayor of Campbelltown. Labor has again nominated its narrowly unsuccessful candidate from 2007, local carpenter Nick Bleasdale.

Election night 2007 found Pat Farmer in a less than statesmanlike mood, reacting to the sharp swing by complaining: "I don't know what more you have to do to please people". He further alienated local opinion by moving from the electorate to the expensive north shore suburb of Mosman, leading most to conclude he would not be seeking an extra term. When he chose to do so, he was soundly rebuffed by local preselectors, who delivered the nomination to Russell Matheson by 22 votes to nine. Imre Salusinszky of *The Australian* quoted Liberal sources saying Farmer only ran to be eligible for parliamentary superannuation granted to those who serve three terms followed by "involuntary departure". He later fished for a berth in the state seat of Camden, but withdrew when it became clear Camden mayor Chris Patterson had the nomination sewn up.

Nick Bleasdale won the right to contest the seat for Labor for a second time with an easy preselection win against Paul Nunnari, wheelchair athlete and adviser to state Campbelltown MP Graham West. There were earlier suggestions Bleasdale might get frozen out by a deal to give Macarthur to Werriwa MP Chris Hayes so his existing seat could go to Laurie Ferguson, left homeless by the abolition of his seat of Reid in the redistribution, but Hayes ended up being accommodated in Fowler. Early candidates who fell by the wayside were Camden deputy mayor Greg Warren and Campbelltown pediatrician Michael Frelander.

Half way through the campaign, Phillip Coorey of the Sydney Morning Herald report internal polling had the Liberals believing that despite being strong overall in New South Wales, they were “in trouble” in Macarthur. However, Patricia Karvelas of The Australian reported a week later that the Liberals believed they would hold the seat “easily”. At around this time the seat was being targeted by three composite polls of New South Wales marginals: a Newspoll survey of six seats around the state which collectively showed a swing against Labor of 1.3 per cent, a Galaxy survey of four western Sydney seats which had the combined swing at 3.9 per cent, and another Galaxy survey of four seats which had it at 2.4 per cent.

Electorate: Gilmore

Margin: Labor 0.2%*

Location: South Coast, New South Wales

* Liberal seat made notional Labor by redistribution

In a nutshell: Gilmore has been in conservative hands for all but one term since its creation in 1984, but the Liberals' hold has been threatened by a redistribution that has added some of the strongest Labor territory in the land in the southern Illawarra. However, they retain two formidable cards in their hand: the long-term incumbency of sitting member Joanna Gash, and a troubled Labor preselection process.

The candidates

BOHDAN BRUMERSKY
Christian Democratic Party

BEN VAN DER WIJNGAART
Greens

ELIZABETH CUNNINGHAM
Family First

NEIL REILLY
Labor (bottom)

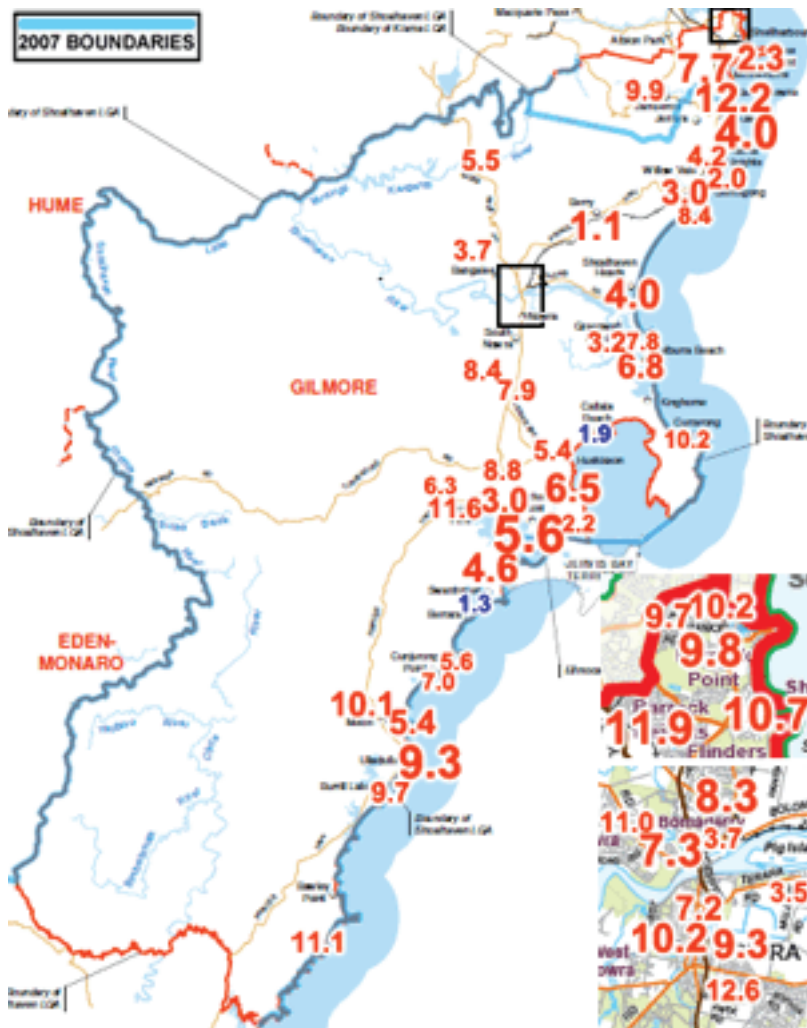
JOANNA GASH
Liberal (top)

ANNETTE WILLIAMS
Secular Party of Australia

DON KEYS
Liberal Democrats



Swing % map



Electorate analysis:

A traditional Liberal seat put on a knife-edge by the redistribution, Gilmore covers the south coast of New South Wales from the southern half of Shellharbour through Kiama, Nowra and Ulladulla to Murramarang National Park. The redistribution has transferred 14,000 voters in and around Batemans Bay at the southern coastal end to Eden-Monaro (reversing a change from the previous redistribution), while adding over 20,000 voters in strongly Labor Shellharbour from Throsby. Incomes in the newly added area are in fact higher than the existing areas of the electorate, but the Illawarra's industrial base gives it a very different electoral profile – one manifestation of which was a particularly strong WorkChoices-driven swing against the Liberals there in 2007.

Gilmore was created with the expansion of parliament in 1984, when it extended deep inland through Goulburn to strong Nationals territory around Young and Cowra. John Sharp held the seat for the Nationals until 1993, when the interior area was transferred to Hume in exchange for southern Illawarra territory around Kiama. This prompted Sharp to instead contest Hume, and Labor's Peter Knott narrowly gained Gilmore with a 1.1 per cent swing. Joanna Gash gained the seat for the Liberals with a 6.7 per cent swing in 1996 and limited the counter-swing to 2.2 per cent in 1998, before scoring the biggest swing in the country (10.1 per cent) when Knott attempted a comeback in 2001. This was reckoned to have been influenced by Knott's campaign assessment that the United States' foreign policy had "come back to bite them" as smoke still rose from the rubble of the World Trade Centre. Further evidence for the Knott effect was provided by the 4.6 per cent correction in Labor's favour in 2004. A 5.3 per cent swing to Labor in 2007, roughly in line with the state average, reduced Gash's margin to 4.1 per cent.

Joanna Gash was a Wingecarribee councillor before the Liberal state executive hand-picked her as candidate for Gilmore in 1996, which at the time was a front-line seat with a 0.5 per cent Labor margin. Gash remained on the back-bench throughout the Howard years, before winning promotion to shadow parliamentary secretary for tourism after the 2007 election defeat. She was dumped from this position after Malcolm Turnbull's successful leadership challenge in September 2008, having been a solid supporter for Brendan Nelson, before recovering the position when Tony Abbott became leader in December 2009. Labor has again nominated its candidate from 2007, Neil Reilly, the president of the party's local federal electorate council

Labor initially chose as its candidate former Rabbitohs player David Boyle, a non-local whose imposition by the party's national executive generated extreme displeasure in the local party. Neil Reilly had been hoping to contest the rank-and-file ballot which the local party was denied, as was Glen Sims, a Culburra real estate agent. Boyle evidently took the backlash to heart, announcing his withdrawal in June. A local vote was duly held, with Reilly prevailing over Sims 50 votes to 14. The state party earlier took an unprecedented decision to ban state MPs from seeking federal preselection, one of whom was rumoured to be ousted Police Minister and Kiama MP Matt Brown who fancied a stab at Gilmore. This was interpreted as a move to prevent electorally damaging associations between state and federal government.

Late in the second week of the campaign, Tony Abbott promised \$20 million to upgrade a notorious section of the Princes Highway between Ulladulla and Batemans Bay.

At the end of the first week of the campaign, the Illawarra Mercury published an IRIS poll of 400 respondents which gave Joanna Gash a hefty primary vote lead of 58 per cent to 31 per cent over Neil Reilly, with the Greens on 11 per cent. This translated into a 60-40 lead on two-party preferred. The margin of error on the poll was a bit under 5 per cent. The electorate was also one of six New South Wales marginals covered by a Newspoll survey in the second last week of the campaign, targeting 200 respondents per electorate, which collectively showed a swing against Labor of 1.3 per cent; and a similar poll of four seats by Galaxy a week out from polling day, which had the swing at 2.4 per cent.

Electorate: Robertson

Margin: Labor 0.1%

Location: Central Coast, New South Wales

Outgoing member: Belinda Neal (Labor)

In a nutshell: Robertson has been the scene for a memorable political soap opera over the past three years, which culminated in the preselection defeat of Labor's narrowly successful candidate at the 2007 election, Belinda Neal. University teacher Deborah O'Neill now has the tough task of retaining the seat for Labor against the challenge of local police sergeant Darren Jameson.

The candidates

MELISSA BATTEN

Independent

GRAHAM FREEMANTLE

Christian Democratic Party

PETER FREEWATER

Greens

DEBORAH O'NEILL

Labor (top)

DARREN JAMESON

Liberal (bottom)

JAKE CASSAR

Independent

DON F. PARKES

One Nation

MICHELLE MEARES

Independent

MICHAEL JAKOB

Family First

NICOLE BEIGER

Liberal Democrats



Electorate analysis:

Covering the coast about 60 kilometres north of central Sydney, Robertson was one of seven New South Wales seats gained by Labor in 2007. The Hawkesbury River marks its boundary with Berowra in the south, and it takes most of its voters from the area north of the river's mouth. This includes Labor-leaning Woy Woy along with more conservative Terrigal and Gosford. From here it extends inland to lightly populated territory including Popran National Park, McPherson State Forest and the Mangrove Creek dam. The redistribution has added the undeveloped area around the dam from the electorate's northern neighbour Dobell.

Although technically a federation seat, Robertson was a very different beast at the time of its creation, when it covered the inland rural areas of Mudgee, Singleton and Scone. As it was drawn over time into the increasingly urbanised coast, the conservatives' hold weakened: Barry Cohen gained the seat for Labor in 1969, and proved able to withstand the twin disasters of 1975 and 1977. The seat drifted back towards the Liberals thereafter, a process which was shoved along when Jim Lloyd defeat incumbent Frank Walker with a 9.2 per cent swing in 1996.

Robertson was won for Labor in 2007 by Belinda Neal, wife of Right faction powerbroker and then senior state minister John Della Bosca, who had served in the Senate from 1994 until she quit in 1998 for a first unsuccessful run in Robertson. Neal prevailed over Lloyd by just 184 votes, shading an existing 6.9 per cent margin with a 7.0 per cent swing. The second leg of her parliamentary career has proved to be both highly eventful and extremely brief. In June 2008 she made headlines after allegedly abusing staff at Gosford restaurant-nightclub Iguana Joe's. This came shortly after an incident in parliament where she appeared to offer a heavily pregnant Sophie Mirabella that "evil thoughts" would make her child "a demon", for which she apologised (while claiming the quote ascribed to her was "not completely accurate"). In August 2009 her husband, who had been present during the Iguana Joe's fracas, resigned as state Health Minister after it was revealed he was having an affair with a 26-year-old woman.

Neal went on to defeat in a preselection vote at the hands of Deborah O'Neill, an education teacher at the University of Newcastle and narrowly unsuccessful state candidate for Gosford in 2003. The Liberals have nominated Darren Jameson, a local police sergeant.

If it was clear after the Iguana Joe's incident that Belinda Neal's preselection was in danger, it was equally clear that neither she or her husband would take such a result lying down. When rumours emerged that Della Bosca planned to challenge then-Premier Nathan Rees for the leadership, there was talk he was merely doing so as a "bargaining chip" to help protect his wife. When news of Della Bosca's infidelity emerged it appeared public sympathy might restore her standing, but this was undermined by a Sydney Morning Herald report that a Labor internal poll of 650 voters had her facing a 20 per cent swing. A challenger emerged in the shape of Deborah O'Neill, who was said by Peter van Onselen in *The Australian* to have "the tacit approval of NSW Labor Right powerbrokers". Members of the party's Ourimbah branch passed a motion calling on Neal to bow out, but she retorted with a claim the branch had "approximately six members". The national executive allowed the decision to be determined by a normal rank-and-file ballot, which delivered victory to O'Neill by a margin of 98 to 67.

Only when nominations closed at the end of the second week of the campaign did it become clear that Belinda Neal would not run an independent, contrary to widespread earlier speculation. AAP referred to "reports Ms Neal was angling for a spot in the NSW parliament", assuming there are any left for Labor after the voters are done with them.

A week out from the election it emerged a complaint had been made to police accusing Jameson of manhandling two boys he believed to have thrown eggs at his car. The complaint was drawn a few days later, amid claims from Jameson Labor had been behind its leaking to the media. Imre Salusinszky of *The Australian* argued that if it was indeed a Labor plot to besmirch Jameson in the eyes of local voters, it hadn't worked.

Half way through the campaign, Phillip Coorey of the Sydney Morning Herald included Robertson among five New South Wales seats where internal polling had the Liberals feeling confident, and there were similar noises from Patricia Karvelas of The Australian a week later. The electorate was one of six New South Wales marginals covered by a Newspoll survey conducted through the second last week of the campaign, targeting 200 respondents per electorate, which collectively showed a swing against Labor of 1.3 per cent.

Electorate: Macquarie

Margin: Labor 0.1%

Location: Blue Mountains, New South Wales

Outgoing member: Bob Debus (Labor)

In a nutshell: Macquarie has been much affected over recent years by redistributions, the latest of which has left it on a knife-edge by exchanging Labor-leaning Bathurst and Lithgow for Sydney's conservative western outskirts. Candidate factors mean Labor starts from behind – Liberal Louise Markus currently represents the newly added area as member for Greenway, while Labor's long-serving state and federal member Bob Debus is not seeking another term.

The candidates

PETER WHELAN
Liberal Democrats

AMY BELL
Independent

CARMEL McCALLUM
Greens

TERRY TREMETHICK
Carers Alliance

SUSAN TEMPLEMAN
Labor (top)

JOHN BATES
Australia First

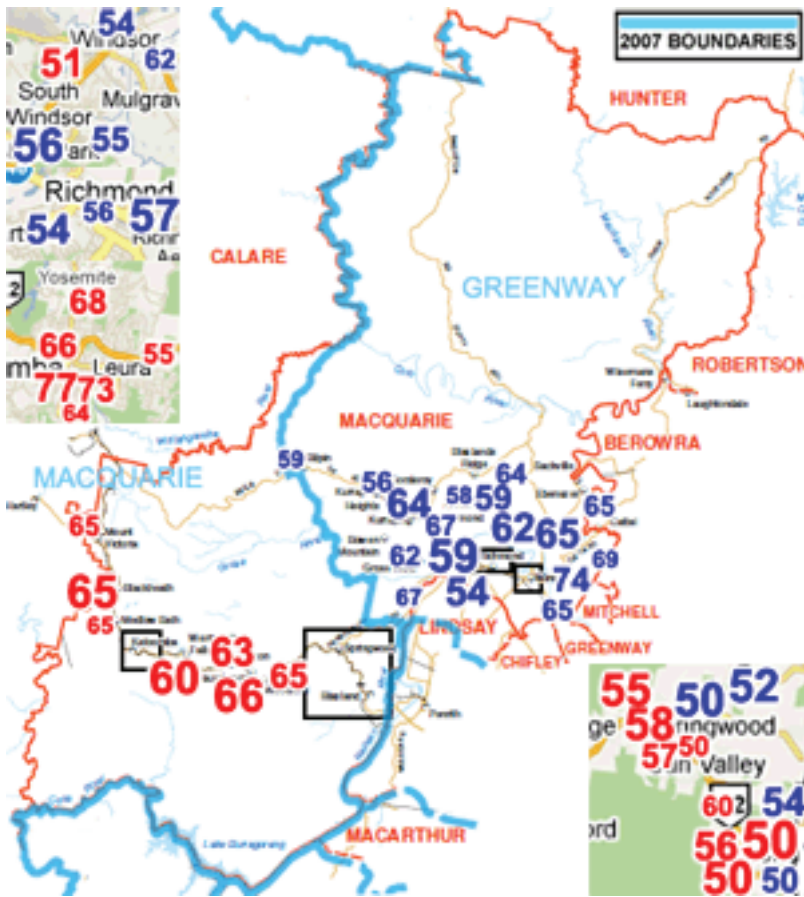
LUKE PORTELLI
Christian Democratic Party

JASON CORNELIUS
Family First

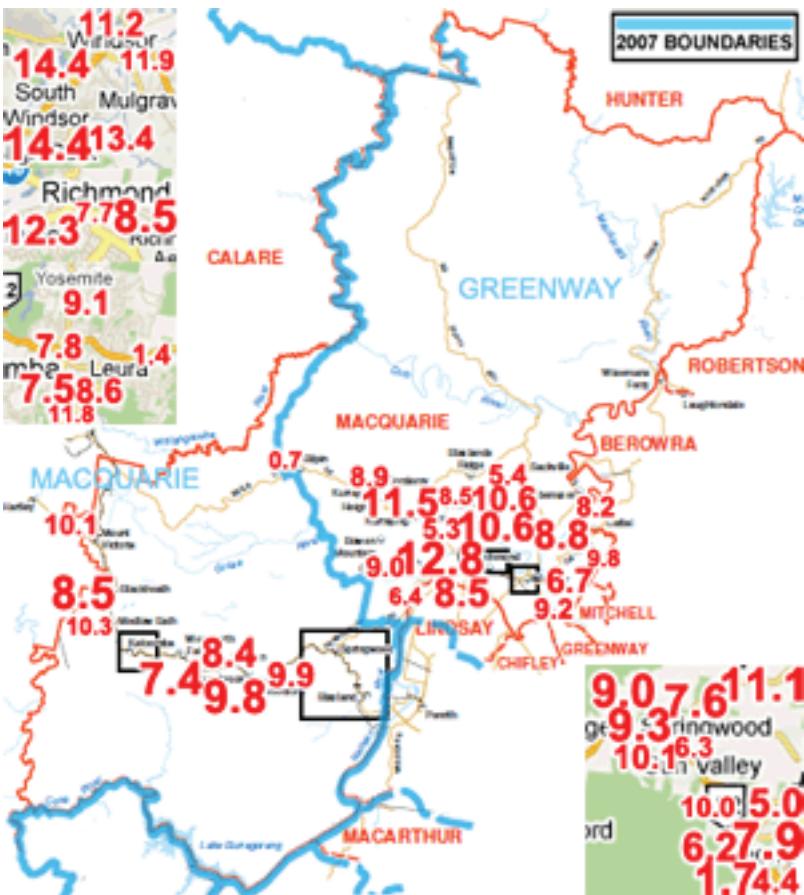
LOUISE MARKUS
Liberal (bottom)



Two-party vote map



Swing % map



Electorate analysis:

The Blue Mountains electorate of Macquarie has undergone massive changes at redistributions ahead of both the 2007 and 2010 elections, the second almost entirely reversing the effects of the first. In 2007 it exchanged the Hawkesbury local government area (to Greenway) for country areas beyond the mountain range, including Bathurst, Lithgow and Oberon (from Calare). This turned a Liberal margin of 8.9 per cent at the 2004 election into a notional Labor margin of 0.5 per cent, to which Labor's candidate – Bob Debus, former state government minister and member for Blue Mountains – added a 6.6 per cent swing that easily disposed of sitting Liberal member Kerry Bartlett. The effective reversal of these changes has left Labor with the most slender of margins, returning 41,000 mostly conservative voters around Richmond at the foot of the Blue Mountains (43 per cent of the total).

Macquarie has had an uninterrupted existence since federation, having been concentrated on Bathurst and Lithgow before moving into Sydney in 1977. Ben Chifley gained the seat for Labor in 1928, lost it again in 1931, and twice tried unsuccessfully to return before finally prevailing in 1940. Labor thereafter held the seat without interruption until the dark years of 1975 to 1980, with Ross Free returning it to the party fold at the 1980 election. The redistribution wrought by the expansion of parliament in 1984 saw the Sydney areas of Penrith and St Marys hived off to the new seat of Lindsay, which all but eliminated the Labor margin. Free jumped ship to the new seat, and Alasdair Webster gained Macquarie for the Liberals after picking up a small but decisive swing. Labor's Maggie Deahm won the seat with a 164-vote margin in 1993, which was easily accounted for by a 6.5 per cent swing to Liberal candidate Kerry Bartlett in 1996.

Bob Debus will retire at the coming election after one term in federal parliament and a career in state politics going back to 1981. His successor as Labor candidate is Susan Templeman, principal of Templeman Consulting, who sells herself as "one of the country's leading media trainers and coaches". The Liberal candidate is Louise Markus, who is vacating the seat of Greenway which she won for the Liberals in 2004, the redistribution having turned it into a metropolitan seat with a solid Labor margin. A community worker with Hillsong Church before entering parliament, Markus was made shadow parliamentary secretary for immigration and citizenship after the 2007 election defeat, shifting to veterans affairs when Malcolm Turnbull became leader in September 2008.

When Bob Debus announced in June 2009 that he would withdraw from the ministry and not seek another term, there was soon-forgotten talk that Labor hoped to recruit either former netballer Liz Ellis or St Vincent DePaul Society chief executive John Falzon. Glenn Milne wrote in *The Australian* that the Debus camp was putting it about that his departure from the ministry – which greatly aided Kevin Rudd as he sought to construct a new cabinet in the wake of Joel Fitzgibbon's resignation as Defence Minister – was conditional upon him being given the right to anoint his own successor. This was hotly disputed by Right powerbrokers who were bitterly opposed to Debus's objective of freezing out industrial barrister and Blue Mountains mayor Adam Searle, a "soft Left" colleague but a personal rival. Searle had earlier sought to succeed Bob Debus as state member for Blue Mountains, but was thwarted when Debus recruited Rural Fire Services commissioner Phil Koperberg.

The "hard Left" reportedly wished for the national executive to decide the issue in favour of Susan Templeman, and to this end its figurehead Anthony Albanese successfully pushed for the decision to be made by a rank-and-file ballot, despite his own role in imposing numerous candidates elsewhere as part of the party's national executive. This marked a win for Albanese over Right faction warlord Senator Mark Arbib, who wanted the national executive to nominate Searle. Searle suffered a further blow when the party's credentialing committee voted down a bid to have 30 out of the 143 preselectors ruled invalid on grounds of branch stacking, and he subsequently withdrew complaining a "fair" vote would not be possible. Templeman went on to win the local ballot 84 votes to 34 over the only other nominee, former policewoman Donna Ritchie.

Half way through the campaign, Phillip Coorey of the Sydney Morning Herald included Macquarie among five New South Wales seats where internal polling had the Liberals feeling confident, and there were similar noises from Patricia Karvelas of The Australian a week later. Morgan conducted a 300-sample poll of the electorate a week out from polling day, and it recorded a 53-47 lead to the Liberals. The electorate was also covered by three composite marginal seat polls conducted in the second last week in the campaign, targeting 200 respondents per electorate: a Newspoll survey of six New South Wales seats which collectively showed a swing against Labor of 1.3 per cent, a Galaxy survey of four seats in western Sydney which had the combined swing at 3.9 per cent, and another Galaxy poll of four seats statewide which had it at 2.4 per cent.

Electorate: Ryan

Margin: Liberal 1.1%

Location: Western Brisbane, Queensland

In a nutshell: A safe Liberal seat for most of its history, Ryan had already become of interest going into the election thanks to a redistribution that pushed it into Labor-friendly inner-city territory. Then came the Liberal National Party's disendorsement of sitting member Michael Johnson and his decision to run as an independent, throwing the contest wide open.

The candidates

STEVEN MILES
Labor (bottom)

SANDRA BAYLEY
Greens

ALLAN VINCENT
Family First

JANE PRENTICE
Liberal National (centre)

MICHAEL JOHNSON
Independent (top)



Swing % map



Electorate analysis:

The western Brisbane seat of Ryan was created in 1949 and currently covers Liberal-voting suburbs on the north bank of the Brisbane River to the west of the city, from St Lucia and Indooroopilly through Fig Tree Pocket and Moggill to Karana Downs, also extending through thinly developed areas across D'aguilar Range to Peewee Bend. The redistribution has had a significant impact on the seat by transferring its territory on the south bank of the river to Moreton, affecting 17,100 voters at Middle Park and Jindalee, while adding 23,100 voters at the northern end of the electorate from solidly Labor-voting Ferny Grove, Keperra and Ashgrove (the imbalance between the two transfers pointing to the electorate's low population growth). This has reduced the Liberal margin from 3.8 per cent to 1.1 per cent.

The seat has been easily won by the Liberals at every general election since its creation, being held by Nigel Drury until 1975 and John Moore thereafter. After serving as Defence Minister in the early years of the Howard government, Moore retired in early 2001, precipitating a by-election which produced a 9.8 per cent swing to Labor and a narrow victory for their candidate Leonie Short. While this provoked much excitement in Labor ranks at the time, it in no way proved a pointer to the election held nine months later, at which the seat was recovered for the Liberals by Michael Johnson, a 34-year-old Hong Kong-born and Cambridge-educated barrister of part Chinese extraction. Johnson had nominated for preselection at the by-election but was compelled to withdraw as he had not sorted out his British citizenship issues, the dubious prize going to former state party president Bob Tucker.

Rivalries that simmered during this contest boiled over in the re-match, with Tucker successfully taking Supreme Court action against a move by the state executive to bypass a local branch plebiscite and install Right candidate Matt Boland. The plebiscite was duly held but Tucker was defeated by Johnson, amid loud complaints of branch-stacking. Despite a margin of 10.4 per cent, the Liberals reportedly feared losing the seat going into the 2007 election. However, like a number of other seats where a Labor boilover had been predicated on a “doctors’ wives” effect, the swing did not prove out of the ordinary – 6.6 per cent compared with a statewide result of 7.5 per cent.

Labor’s hopes of going one better next time were raised first by the redistribution and then by concerns surrounding Michael Johnson, with reports emerging early in the year that the Liberal National Party was investigating his expenditure records and fundraising activities. The party expelled Johnson in May for attempting to broker an export deal between the Queensland Coal Corporation and a Chinese conglomerate during parliamentary sittings and with the use of his parliamentary email address. A commission of as much as \$12 million for brokering the deal was discussed, but Johnson denied standing to benefit personally.

Johnson claimed he had advice that he could successfully challenge his expulsion in the courts but lacked the resources to do so, instead announcing he would run as an independent. In his stead the Liberal National Party has endorsed Jane Prentice, a senior party figure on Brisbane City Council. Labor’s candidate is Steven Miles, a former official with the Queensland Public Sector Union.

A Liberal National Party preselection process quickly swung into action following Michael Johnson’s expulsion, with Jane Prentice having been named the likely winner even before the event. Her main rival was at first reported to be Seb Monsour, a manager with catering and cleaning firm Spotless and the brother-in-law of Brisbane lord mayor Campbell Newman, but he dropped out of the race. Prentice went on to an easy victory with 158 votes over 39 for second-placed Christian Rowan, a Brisbane medical practitioner who ran for the Nationals in Gympie at the 2004 state election. This prompted Johnson to complain the party had chosen an “opportunistic politician” over a “talent” in Rowan. Labor’s Steven Miles won preselection ahead of Martin Hanson despite backing for the latter from Kevin Rudd’s Labor Unity faction, having reportedly enjoyed strong support in local branches.

Electorate: Dickson

Margin: Labor 1.0%*

Location: Outer Northern Brisbane, Queensland

* Liberal seat made notionally Labor by redistribution

In a nutshell: This knife-edge marginal will provide a test case for how voters react to a candidate who would prefer to be somewhere else, Liberal front-bencher Peter Dutton having been rebuffed in his bid for a safer berth in McPherson on the Gold Coast. Labor candidate Fiona McNamara is hoping for second time lucky, a redistribution having boosted her chances after she narrowly missed out in 2007.

The candidates

PETER DUTTON

Liberal National (top)

ALAN REVIE

Family First

DAVID COLBERT

Greens

BOB HUNTER

Liberal Democrats

FIONA McNAMARA

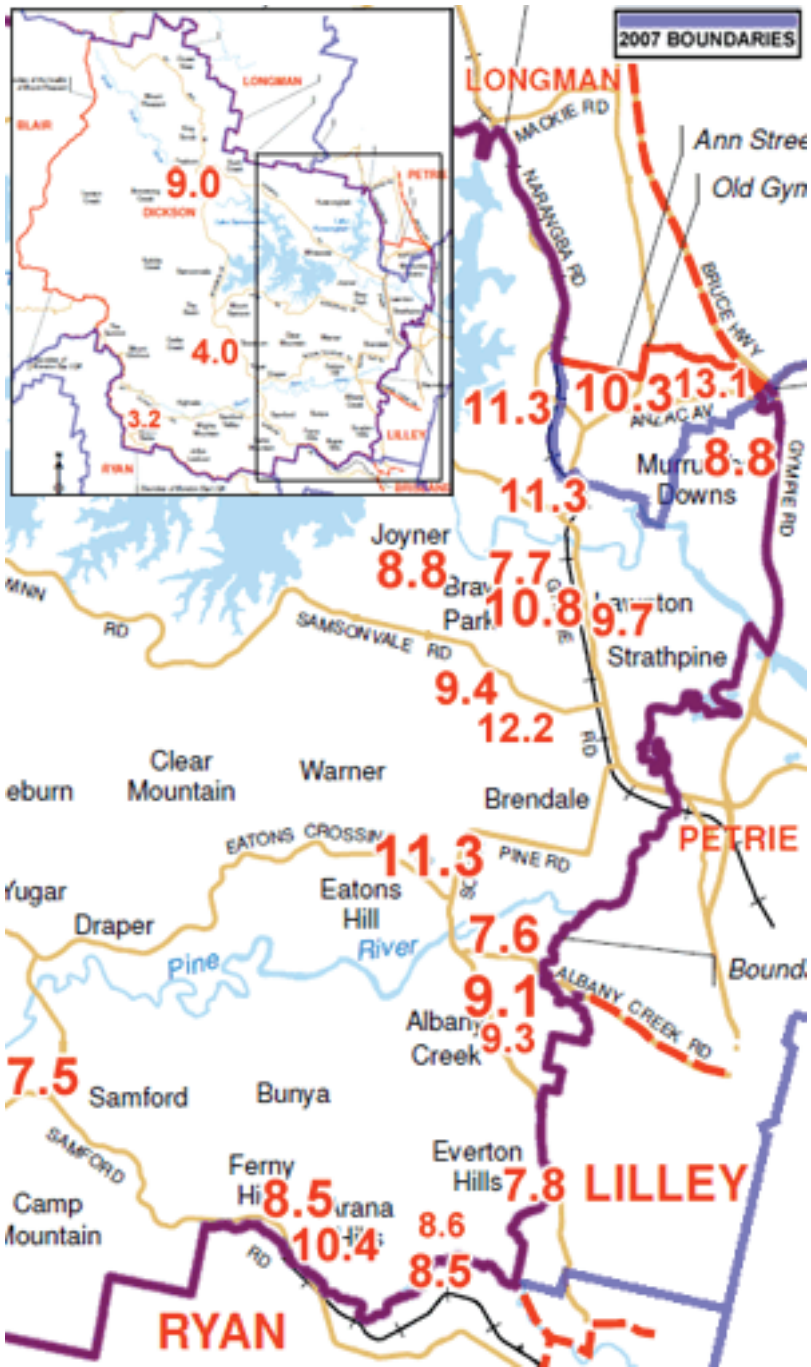
Labor (bottom)

REBECCA JENKINSON

Independent



Swing % map



Electorate analysis:

Dickson was created when Queensland's relentless population growth demanded a new seat in 1993, taking its place in Brisbane's expanding northern outskirts. It presently covers the western edge of the city's northern corridor: from south to north, this includes the marginal hills district suburbs of Ferny Hills, Arana Hills and Everton Hills; an area of Liberal strength around Pine River including Albany Creek and Eatons Hill; and Labor-leaning suburbs along Gympie Road and the Caboolture rail line including Strathpine, Bray Park, Lawnton and Petrie (confusingly, the latter is not located in the electorate bearing its name). It also extends westwards beyond the metropolitan area to Lake Samsonvale and the interior edge of the D'Aguilar Range, including the townships of Dayboro and Samsonvale. The redistribution has shifted the seat from the Liberal column to Labor by transferring its areas beyond the mountain range in the upper Brisbane River valley to Blair and adding suburban territory at Murrumba Downs from Longman, which even before the election has had significant consequences.

Dickson was won for Labor on its creation by Michael Lavarch, previously member for Fisher. Lavarch went on to serve as Attorney-General in the second term of the Keating government, and became one of its highest profile casualties of the 1996 election. The winning Liberal candidate was Tony Smith (not to be confused with the current member for Casey in Melbourne), whose career imploded when police questioned him after he left a building that housed a brothel. Smith forestalled preselection defeat by quitting the Liberal Party and declaring his intention to run as an independent.

By this time it had emerged that the Labor candidate for the 1998 election would be defecting Democrats leader Cheryl Kernot, who had announced her determination to win a marginal seat for Labor. It appeared on election night that her bid had failed, prompting a television interview in which she lashed out at a party network that had deprived her campaign of resources. She would go on to win by 276 votes but proved to be a disaster area in her one and only term as a Labor MP, which was ended by a 6.1 per cent swing in 200.

The new Liberal member was Peter Dutton, who had worked for the National Crime Authority, the Queensland Police sex offender squad and corrective services and later owned a child care centre in Brisbane. Dutton consolidated his hold on Dickson with a 1.8 per cent swing in 2004 and was subsequently admitted to the outer ministry in the workforce participation portfolio, winning a minor promotion to Revenue Minister and Assistant Treasurer in January 2006. After surviving the Queensland backlash against the Coalition at the 2007 election by just 217 votes (0.13 per cent), Dutton's star has continued to rise in opposition. He entered shadow cabinet first in the finance, competition policy and deregulation portfolios, and then in health and ageing after he backed Malcolm Turnbull's successful leadership bid against Brendan Nelson in September 2008. When the redistribution commissioners made life still more difficult for him in July 2009 by proposing that Dickson be stripped of its rural territories in the west, he cast around for a new opportunity to keep his promising career afloat.

Shortly after, Margaret May announced she would not seek to extend her long and generally uneventful career in the safe Liberal Gold Coast seat of McPherson beyond the next election, and Dutton surprised nobody by throwing his hat into the ring. However, well-organised locals had long had their eyes on the succession and were not of a mind to accommodate his ambitions, being readily able to draw on the argument that Dutton would better serve his party by standing and fighting for his crucial marginal seat. Dutton unwisely sought to raise the stakes by declaring he would not fall back on Dickson if thwarted in McPherson, evidently hoping preselectors would balk at the prospect of depriving the party of his services. Despite backing for Dutton from Malcolm Turnbull and John Howard, this proved to be a miscalculation: the local preselection vote was won by local favourite Karen Andrews, with Dutton reportedly meeting opposition from the erstwhile Nationals component of the Liberal National Party branches. Fearing a local rebellion, the party's state executive declined to exercise the nuclear option of refusing to ratify the result.

Dutton's defeat led to speculation he might instead be accommodated by a retirement announcement from Fisher MP Peter Slipper or Fairfax MP Alex Somlyay, but neither proved willing to move. Another theoretical possibility, the new Gold Coast hinterland seat of Wright, was of no use as the party merger arrangement had reserved it for the Nationals. Shortly after, the redistribution commission decided to slightly limit the scope of the changes proposed for Dickson in its draft report: as the Liberal National Party submission requested, the electorate recovered the northern rural area along Dayboro Road and Woodford Road that it was set to lose to Longman. However, only a small concession was made to the LNP's request that the troublesome Kallangur area be kept out of the electorate, and the electoral impact was an accordingly slight clipping of the notional Labor margin from 1.3 per cent to 1.0 per cent. Dutton was nonetheless sufficiently encouraged that he went back on his original determination not to contest the seat, despite the obvious risk that he had blotted his copybook in the eyes of local voters.

Labor has again nominated its candidate from 2007, Fiona McNamara, who is the Brisbane north organiser of the Queensland Teachers Union – a position which made life complicated for her as the union wrestled with the government over the My School website.

Dickson was targeted by two composite marginal seat polls just over a week before polling day: a News-poll survey of 1600 respondents in eight Queensland marginals, which had the swing against Labor at 3.4 per cent, and a similar Galaxy survey of 800 in four seats, which had it at 5.4 per cent.

Electorate: Bowman

Margin: Liberal 0.0%

Location: South-Eastern Brisbane, Queensland

In a nutshell: Liberal member Andrew Laming was very lucky his seat wasn't a tenth Labor gain in Queensland at the 2007 election, when he secured victory by just 64 votes. The seat had previously changed hands along with the previous three changes of government in 1975, 1983 and 1996.

The candidates

ANDREW LAMING

Liberal National (top)

DAVID KEOGH

Greens

JENNY PETERS

Labor (bottom)

DAVE CHIDGEY

One Nation

KARINA WINDOLF

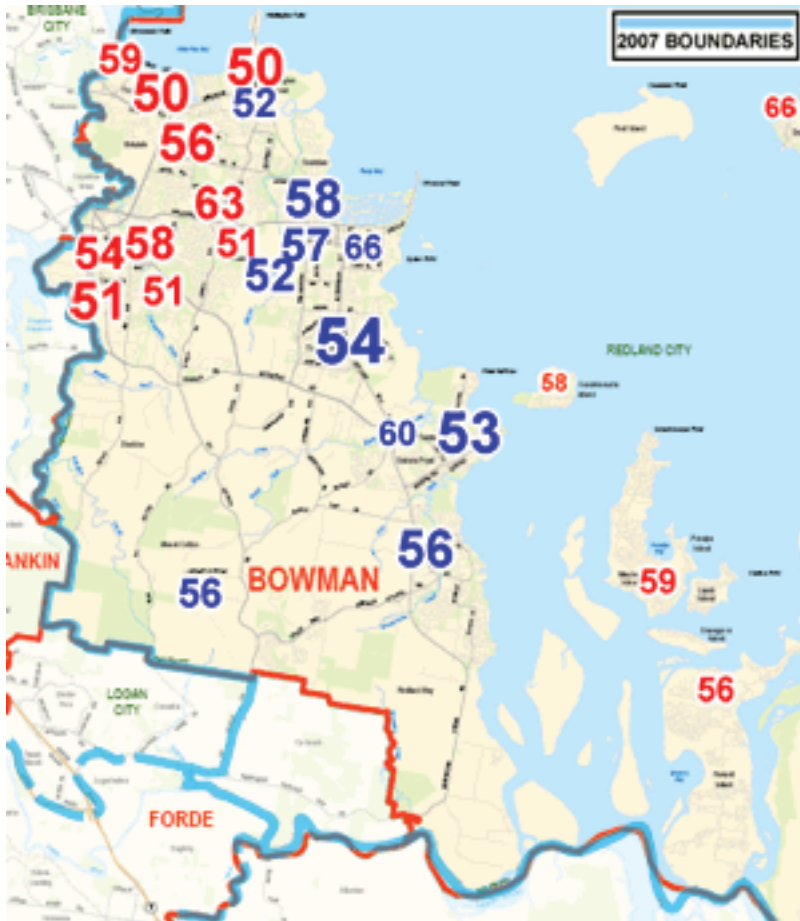
Family First

JOHN KENT

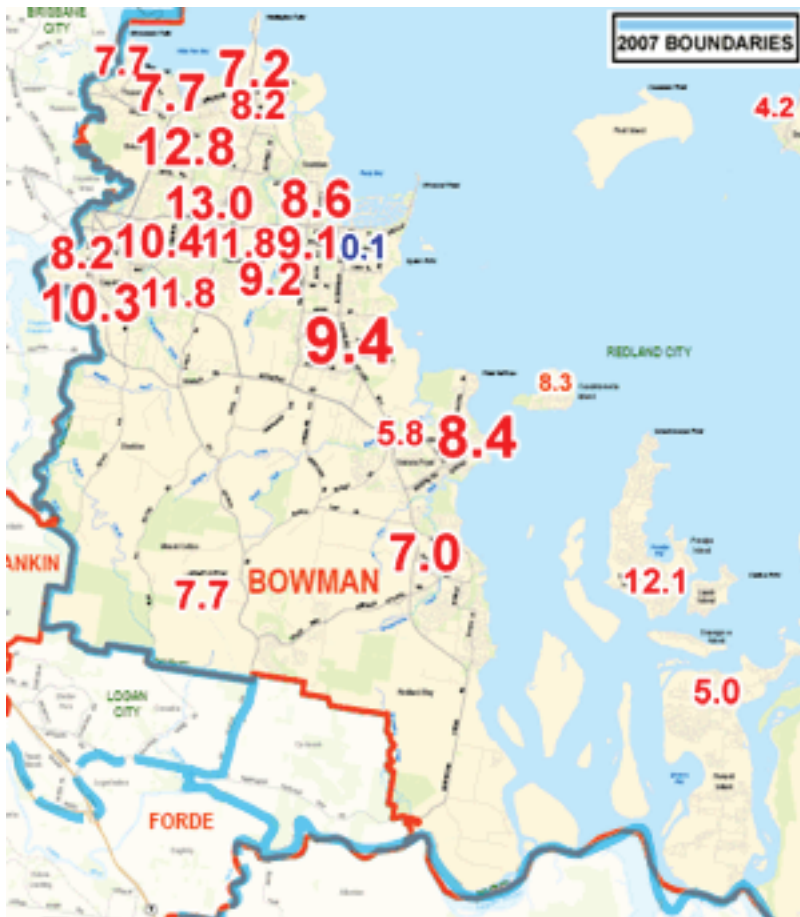
Democratic Labor Party



Two-party vote map



Swing % map



Electorate analysis:

Bowman extends from Brisbane's outer coastal south, from Thorneside through Capalaba and Sheldon to Redland Bay. The redistribution tiny effect of the redistribution, transferring around 860 voters in Cornubia and Carbrook in the south of the electorate. This has left Antony Green having to calculate the margin to the third decimal place to determine that it still belongs on the Labor side of the pendulum. The seat has been marginal seat since it was created with the expansion of parliament in 1949. The Liberals held it from then until the Menzies government's brush with death in 1961, before recovering it in 1963. The swing achieved by Gough Whitlam in 1969 delivered the seat to Labor, and it changed hands along with government in 1975, 1983 and 1996. Leonard Keogh held the seat for Labor from 1969 to 1975 and again after 1983, also contesting unsuccessfully in 1977 and 1980. He was defeated for preselection in 1987 by Con Sciacca, who lost the seat in 1996 and won it back in 1998. The Liberal member in the Fraser government period was David Jull, who re-emerged in Fadden in 1984; the one-term member from 1996 was Andrea West.

Bowman was dramatically affected by the redistribution at the 2004 election, when it gained its current coastal area and lost Wynnum-Manly to the new seat of Bonner. This produced a 4.4 per cent shift to the Liberals, prompting Sciacca to unsuccessfully try his luck in Bonner. Bowman subsequently fell to Liberal candidate Andrew Laming, an ophthalmologist and World Bank health consultant who boosted the notional 3.0 per cent Liberal margin with an impressive 5.9 per cent swing. Laming spent much of 2007 under the shadow of the "printgate" affair, in which he was investigated for allegedly claiming \$67,000 in taxpayer funds to print campaign material for state election candidates. He was finally cleared by the Commonwealth Department of Public Prosecutions two months before the election. After rumblings that the issue might cost him his preselection, Laming emerged from the 2007 election with a margin of 64 votes, the second closest result in the country after Fran Bailey's court-determined 31-vote win in the Victorian seat of McEwen. The swing to Labor was 8.9 per cent, compared with a statewide result of 7.5 per cent.

In May 2009, Laming was included in a list of 14 Liberal MPs whom "major business donors" demanded make way for new blood if the Liberal Party is to get their donations, which was provided to journalist Glenn Milne. At 42, Laming was one of only two on the list under the age of 60, together with 39-year-old Ryan MP Michael Johnson. Liberal sources evidently put it to conservative pundit Andrew Bolt that responsibility for the article ultimately lay with party treasurer and Turnbull ally Michael Yabsley, and formed part of a move by moderates against figures of the Right. However, nothing further was heard of suggestions that Laming's position was endangered.

Labor has nominated the apparently low-profile figure of Jenny Peters, who has been described as a "local businesswoman and mother of two".

Jenny Peters was installed by the party's national executive in March after what The Australian reported as a deal granting Herbert to the AWU sub-faction of the Right, Dawson to its rival Labor Unity sub-faction and Bowman to the Left. The candidate from 2007, Jason Young, reportedly lost Left backing in late 2009 due to his campaigning against the Bligh government's asset sales in his capacity as an Electrical Trades Union organiser. Young pulled out of contention in February shortly before facing court on three traffic offences, saying he felt he should make way for a "good Left female candidate".

A week out from polling day, Mark Bahnish of Larvatus Prodeo observed that in Bowman Labor was "barely running a campaign, with reports appearing for weeks in the Brisbane Times that their candidate is invisible, and the local papers can't get hold of her for an interview".

Bowman was one of four Queensland marginals covered by composite Galaxy poll of 800 respondents just over a week before polling day, which showed Labor facing a two-party swing of 5.4 per cent.

Electorate: Herbert

Margin: Labor 0.4%*

Location: Townsville, Queensland

Outgoing member: Peter Lindsay (Liberal)

* Liberal seat made notionally Labor by redistribution

In a nutshell: The statewide swing to Labor in 2007 brought the Townsville-based seat of Herbert down to the wire, and the redistribution has now pushed it into the Labor column. The outcome will depend on which factor is the greater: the loss to the Liberal National Party of retiring member Peter Lindsay's personal vote, or the much-touted discontent with Labor in regional Queensland.

The candidates

TONY MOONEY

Labor (top)

EWEN JONES

Liberal National (bottom)

MICHAEL PUNSHON

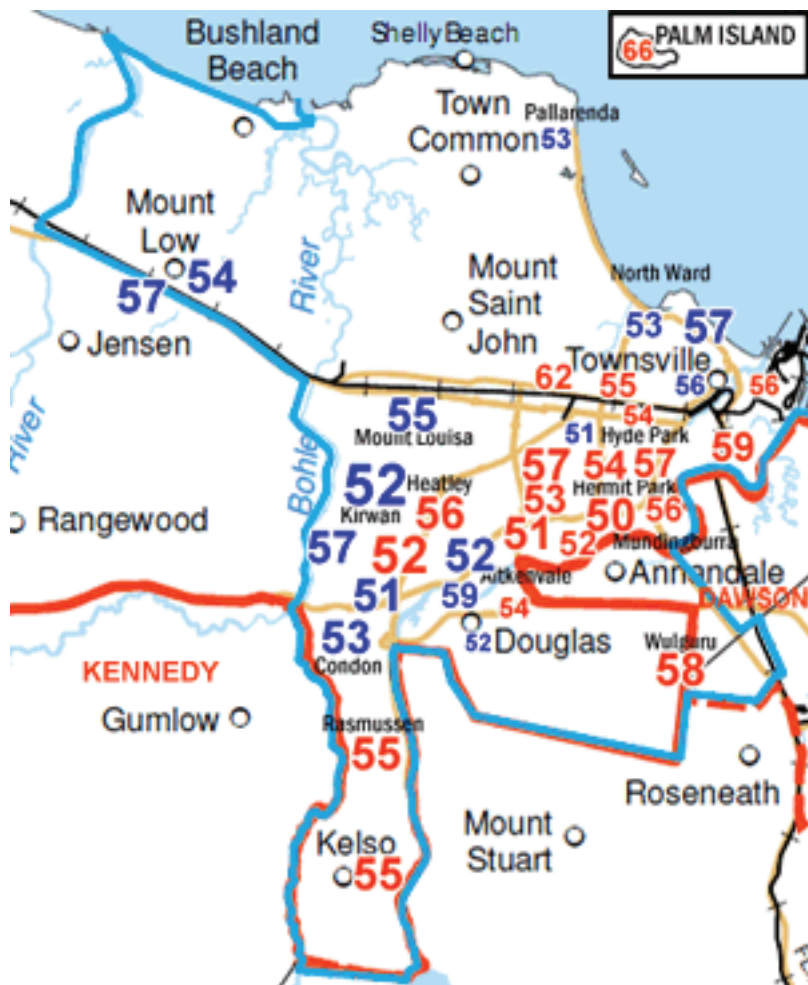
Family First

MIKE RUBENACH

Greens



Two-party vote map



Electorate analysis: The Townsville-based electorate of Herbert was created at federation, at which time it extended north to Cairns and south to Mackay. It now covers most of Townsville and a shifting aggregation of surrounding territory: the most recent redistribution has added Deeragun and the city's western coastal hinterland as far as Bluewater (from Kennedy) and removed the southern suburbs of Annandale and Wulguru (to Dawson), each transfer affecting about 7400 voters. Liberal strength in the latter area has resulted in a small but decisive change in the margin in Herbert, from 0.2 per cent Liberal to 0.4 per cent Labor.

Support for Labor is generally stronger in and around the town centre than in the suburbs, which demonstrated their sensitivity to interest rates by swinging strongly to the Liberals in 2004 and then to Labor in 2007. On the 2007 boundaries, the electorate ranked seventeenth out of 150 for number of voters over 55 and had the country's eighth highest indigenous population, at 6.9 per cent (much of it concentrated in troubled Palm Island). Lavarack Barracks makes the electorate highly sensitive to defence issues: Antony Green noted before the 2004 election that one in eight jobs in the electorate was linked to defence. Adam Carr of Psephos has noted the influence of a booming tourism industry in contributing to relatively high incomes for a regional seat.

Herbert was mostly in Labor hands until the 1960s, and turned in a 34.2 per cent vote for Communist Party candidate Frederick Paterson in 1943 (Paterson went on to win the state seat of Bowen the following year, the only such success for a Communist candidate in Australian history). A watershed moment came with the victory of Liberal candidate Robert Bonnett in the 1966 landslide, which was followed by further swings against the trend of the 1969 and 1972 elections. The seat came back on Labor's radar in 1980 when Ted Lindsay cut the margin below 1 per cent, before finishing the job with a 3.7 per cent swing in 1983.

Lindsay held the seat until 1996, when a 9.0 per cent swing delivered it to unrelated Liberal candidate Peter Lindsay. The local state seats of Thuringowa and Burdekin were among the 11 that fell to One Nation in 1998 (though their vote in Townsville was markedly lower), but their candidate for Herbert only managed 14.3 per cent in 1998. Ted Lindsay came within 160 votes of pulling off a comeback at that election, but Peter Lindsay consolidated with swings of 1.5 per cent in 2001 and 4.7 per cent in 2004. Lindsay did relatively well to limit the swing to 5.9 per cent in 2007 compared with a statewide result of 7.5 per cent, managing to hang on for a 343-vote victory over Labor candidate George Colbran, owner of eight McDonald's franchises in the local region.

In January 2010 Lindsay announced he would not be seeking another term, readily admitting the timing of the announcement was chosen for "strategic reasons". The Townsville Bulletin subsequently reviewed the achievements of his final term: a fact-finding mission encompassing 13 different countries, resulting in a report that plagiarised Wikipedia and featured a Photoshopped image purporting to show Lindsay at a Beirut war cemetery. The new Liberal National candidate is Ewen Jones, an auctioneer for local real estate agency Ferry Property. Labor has nominated Tony Mooney, who served as Townsville mayor from 1989 to 2008 and as a councillor from 1980. Mooney was defeated in the 2008 mayoral election after a council merger forced him into a contest against the mayor of Thuringowa, the victorious Les Tyrell. Mooney earned a footnote in Australian political history when his failure to win the 1996 Mundingburra by-election for Labor led to the downfall of the Goss government.

Tony Mooney was installed as the Labor candidate by the party's national executive in late March, after what The Australian described as a deal granting Herbert to the AWU sub-faction of the Right, Dawson to its rival Labor Unity sub-faction and Bowman to the Left. The intervention was reportedly conducted at the direction of the Prime Minister, who feared a rebuff from local members after publicly supporting Mooney. Local councillor Jenny Hill, said by a Poll Bludger correspondent to be linked to Right faction powerbroker Bill Ludwig, reportedly had wide support in the local branches, whereas Mooney was said to have support from the Left. The candidate from 2007, George Colbran, was also mentioned as a possible starter.

Electorate: Corangamite

Margin: Labor 0.9%

Location: Outer Geelong/Western Coastal, Victoria

In a nutshell: Once a rural conservative stronghold, Corangamite has been steadily transformed not only by the “sea change” phenomenon (which took its name from a television series set in the electorate at Barwon Heads), but also by creeping urban sprawl in outer Geelong. The watershed moment arrived in 2007 when veteran Liberal member Stewart McArthur was unseated by Labor’s Darren Cheeseman.

The candidates

MIKE LAWRENCE
Greens

SARAH HENDERSON
Liberal (bottom)

DARREN CHEESEMAN
Labor (top)

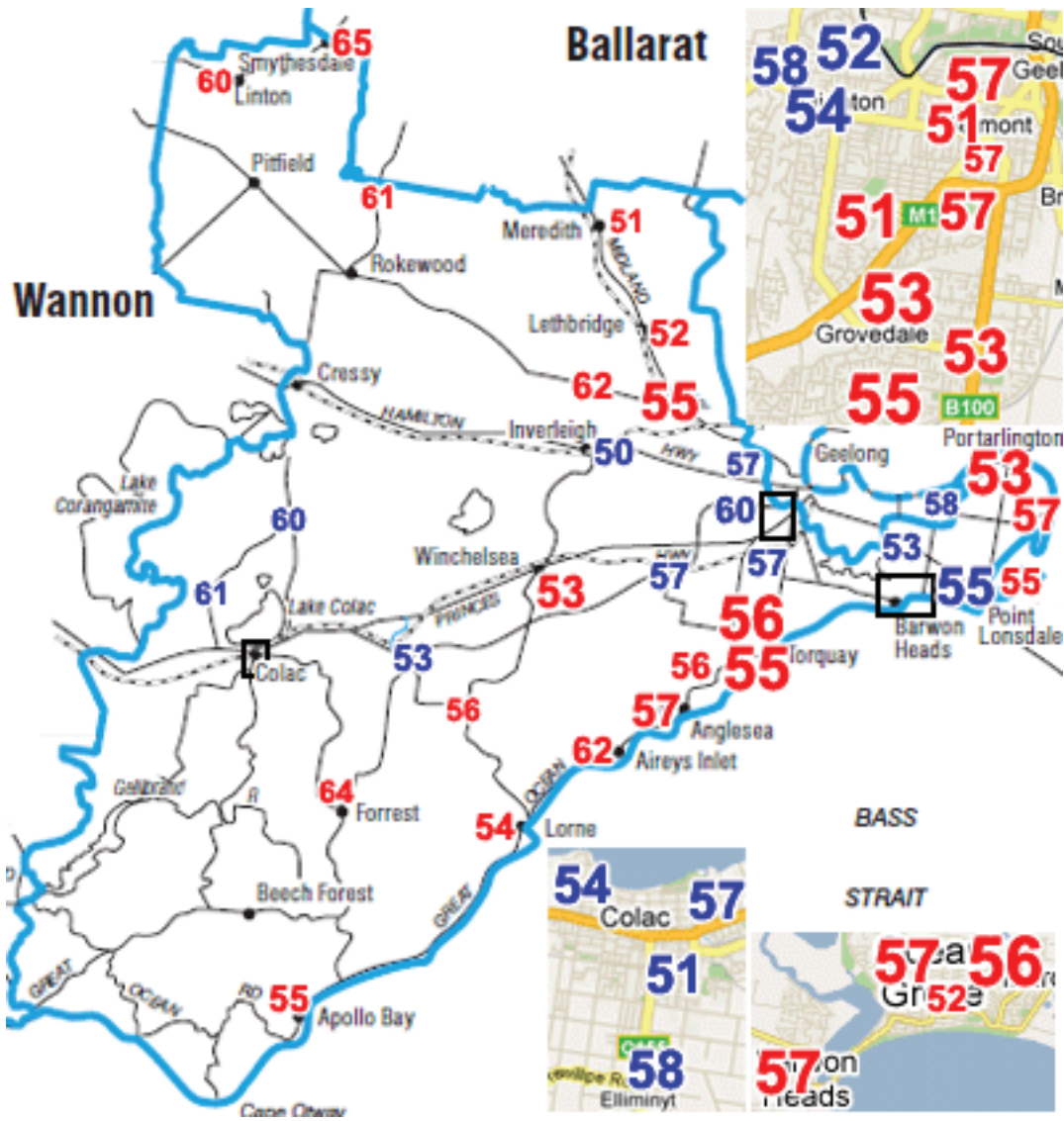
SALLY-ANNE BROWN
Independent

ANN WOJCZUK
Family First

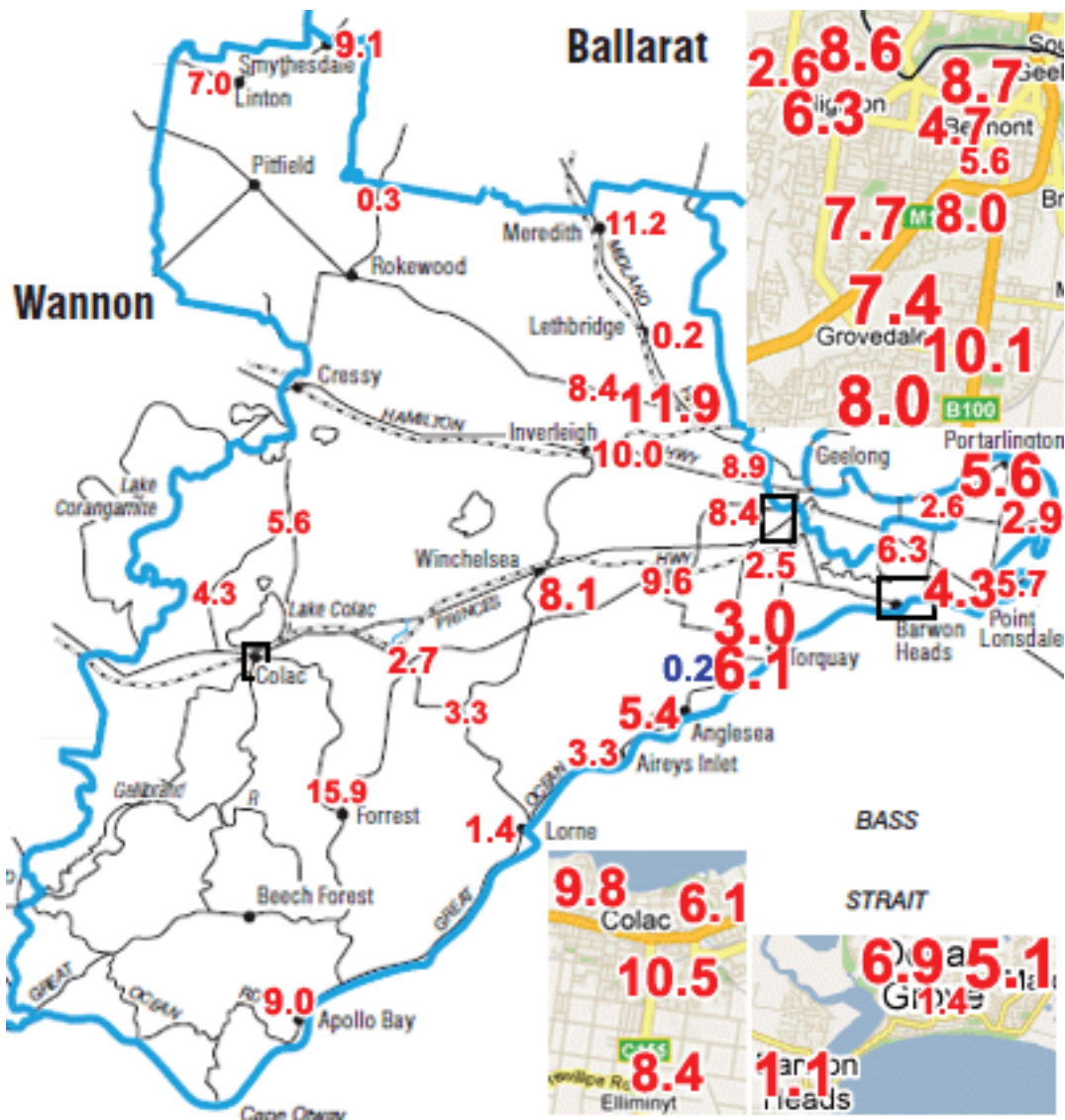
NATHAN TIMMINS
Liberal Democrats



Two-party vote map



Swing % map



Electorate analysis:

Corangamite was one of Labor's two Victorian gains at the 2007 election, producing their first win here since the Great Depression. Created at federation, the electorate has covered a shifting area around Colac 150 kilometres west of Melbourne, but urban expansion in Geelong's outskirts and the towns of the Surf Coast have boosted Labor by altering the seat's traditionally rural complexion. This process began in 1955, when a redistribution added the outer Geelong suburbs of South Barwon and Belmont. Labor's only wins prior to 2007 were in 1910, when future Prime Minister Jim Scullin became member for a term (he would return as member for the inner Melbourne seat of Yarra in 1922), and at the 1929 election when Scullin's short-lived government came to power. The Country Party held the seat for one term from 1931, after which it was held by the United Australia Party and then the Liberal Party. The enlargement of parliament in 1984 cost Corangamite its most conservative rural territory in the west, but it took another 23 years before Labor was able to realise its hopes of gaining the seat.

In its current form the electorate includes the Geelong suburbs south-west of the Barwon River, the Bellarine Peninsula and Great Ocean Road coast as far west as Apollo Bay, along with rural areas to the west and north. The Geelong area contains a little over a third of the electorate's voters, and is distinguished from the remainder by its younger demographic profile and preponderance of mortgage payers. The coast is a "sea change" area in more ways than one, encompassing the coastal town of Barwon Heads where the ABC TV series of that name was shot. Torquay and the Bellarine Peninsula are demographically of a piece with outer Geelong, but the fast-growing towns of Lorne, Anglesea and Apollo Bay to the west include large numbers of older voters and fewer houses being purchased. As shown on the map of two-party booth results from 2007, the Geelong suburban areas encompass Liberal-leaning Highton and marginal Belmont and Grovedale, while the non-urban territory encompasses the Labor-leaning towns of the Great Ocean Road and solidly conservative rural areas.

Corangamite was held for the Liberals from 1984 to 2007 by Stewart McArthur, who was 70 when he sought another term in 2007, to the dismay of some in the party. McArthur's Labor challenger Darren Cheeseman, an official with the Left faction Community and Public Sector Union, was just 31. Cheeseman won a hotly contested preselection over Peter McMullin, the Right-backed mayor of Geelong and candidate from 2004. The result surprised many observers in view of the Right's recent ascendancy in Geelong-area preselections, the most notable example being Richard Marles' win over incumbent Gavan O'Connor in Corio. Cheeseman went on to overwhelm McArthur's 5.3 per cent margin with a 6.2 per cent swing that was evenly distributed throughout the electorate.

The new Liberal candidate is Sarah Henderson, a former host of The 7.30 Report in the days when it was made on a state-by-state basis. Henderson is the daughter of former state Geelong MP Ann Henderson.

According to VexNews, Sarah Henderson won preselection with the backing of the Ted Baillieu-Jeff Kennett faction and "business elements in Geelong", prevailing in the final round vote over Rod Nockles, an internet security expert and former Howard government adviser backed by the Michael Kroger axis. Earlier rounds saw the progressive elimination of funeral company owner Michael King, Victorian Farmers Federation president Simon Ramsay, policy adviser Robert Hardie and former Stewart McArthur staffer Simon Price. Price reportedly had the backing of McArthur and his party activist wife Bev, who threw their support behind Henderson after he was eliminated.

Corangamite was one of four Victorian marginals covered by a Galaxy survey of 800 respondents in the second last week of the campaign, and it showed a collective swing to Labor of 1.6 per cent.

Electorate: La Trobe

Margin: Liberal 0.5%

Location: Outer Eastern Melbourne, Victoria

In a nutshell: Located in Melbourne's once-crucial eastern suburbs, La Trobe recorded a strong swing to Labor in line with the regional trend in 2007, but it wasn't quite enough. Liberal member Jason Wood will again have his work cut out for him defending a slender margin against a threatened Victorian Labor resurgence.

The candidates

MARTIN LEAHY
Australian Sex Party

JASON WOOD
Liberal (top)

DAVID BARROW
Family First

LAURA SMYTH
Labor (bottom)

JIM REIHER
Greens

SHEM BENNETT
Liberal Democrats



Electorate analysis:

La Trobe has covered Melbourne's eastern fringe since it was created with the enlargement of parliament in 1949, drifting south-eastwards over time from its starting point of Dandenong and Croydon. It now consists of two outer Melbourne areas separated by the Dandenong Ranges – Boronia and Ferntree Gully in the north, and the Berwick area in the south – and extends east through Belgrave to Emerald, Cockatoo and Gembrook. Labor's strength around Belgrave is countered by Liberal dominance in rapidly growing Berwick and Narre Warren North. Along with other seats in Melbourne's outer suburban "sand-belt", La Trobe played a decisive role in the election of the Whitlam government in 1972, falling to Labor for the first time with a 10.2 per cent swing. It swung almost as heavily the other way in 1975, but returned to the Labor fold in 1980 when Peter Milton defeated Liberal member Marshall Baillieu (part of the clan that includes state party leader Ted). An unfavourable redistribution in 1990 combined with the statewide anti-Labor tsunami at that year's election to deliver a 1.4 per cent victory to Liberal candidate Bob Charles. The seat had a remarkably stable time of it on Charles's watch, staying with the Liberals by 2.4 per cent in 1993, 1.4 per cent in 1996, 1.0 per cent in 1998 and 3.7 per cent in 2001.

With Charles's retirement at the 2004 election, the seat emerged as a contest between Liberal candidate Jason Wood, a police officer who had worked in counter-terrorism and organised crime units, and Labor's

Susan Davies, who held the since-abolished state seat of Gippsland West as an independent from 1997 to 2002. The result was an easy win for Wood, who defied the loss of Charles's personal vote to pick up a 2.1 per cent swing that was concentrated in the heavily mortgaged suburbs nearer the city. Wood had won preselection with the backing of the Kennett faction after cutting his teeth as candidate for Holt in 2001. It was noted at the time he had "been a member of Greenpeace for longer than he has been a member of the Liberal Party", and he went on to embarrass his party ahead of the 2007 election by issuing a brochure that failed to sing from its song sheet on nuclear power.

Wood went into the 2007 election with a 5.8 per cent margin, of which only 0.5 per cent was left after a swing that was most conspicuous in the areas that had moved to the Liberals in 2004. The defeated Labor candidate was Rodney Cocks, a decorated United Nations security adviser who had been on the scene in the aftermath of the Bali bombings. During the campaign Michael Bachelard of *The Age* reported being contacted by a "Liberal campaign source" who sought to smear Cocks with, among other things, claims he had exaggerated his exploits in Bali – an assertion powerfully rebutted by a testimonial from a survivor which Labor distributed around the electorate.

Jason Wood was promoted to parliamentary secretary for justice and public security when Malcolm Turnbull assumed the Liberal leadership in September 2008, despite the embarrassment he had recently suffered after stammering his way through a parliamentary speech on genetically modified organisms (which repeatedly came out as "orgasms"). Labor's new candidate Holding Redlich lawyer Laura Smyth, whom Andrew Landeryou at VexNews links to the "Andrew Giles/Alan Griffin sub-faction of the Socialist Left".

Labor has promised \$55 million to widen a dangerous stretch of Clyde Road, which the Liberals trumped in the third week of the campaign with an \$85 million promise of a railway underpass.

La Trobe was covered by two composite marginal seat polls in the second last week of the campaign. Newspoll's survey of 600 voters across three Victorian marginals produced a striking swing to Labor of 6.2 per cent – at least 3 per cent higher than the statewide trend – while Galaxy's survey of 800 respondents in four seats had it at a far more modest 1.6 per cent.

Electorate: McEwen

Margin: Liberal 0.0%

Location: Central Southern, Victoria

Outgoing member: Fran Bailey (Liberal)

In a nutshell: Covering much of the area devastated by the February 2009 bushfires, McEwen produced one of the closest results of recent memory in 2007 when Liberal member Fran Bailey prevailed by a court-determined margin of 27 votes. With Bailey now retiring, Labor's Rob Mitchell will be hoping to succeed where he narrowly failed in 2007, despite the Liberals' astute endorsement of a police officer credited with saving lives during the bushfires.

The candidates

ROB MITCHELL
Labor (bottom)

MARK BINI
Liberal Democrats

STEVE MEACHER
Greens

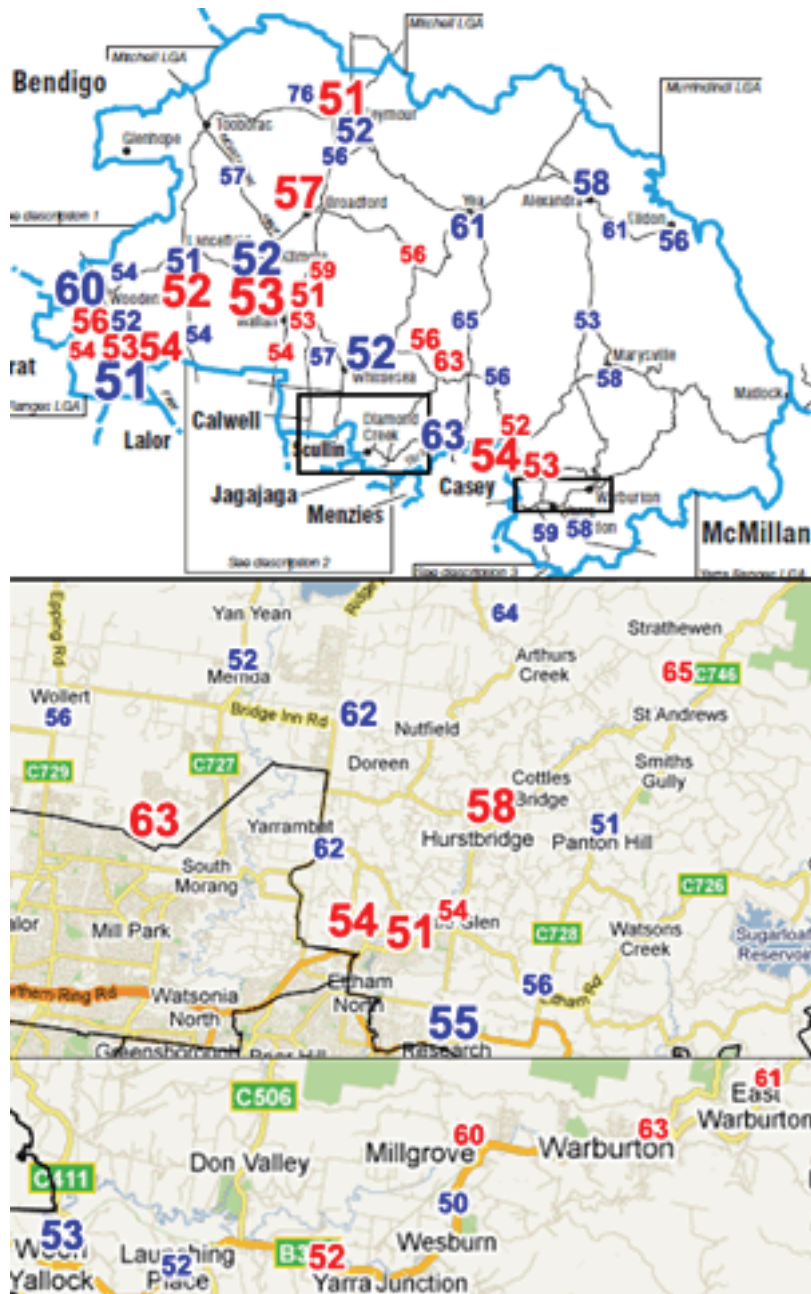
CAMERON CAINE
Liberal (top)

ROBERT GORDON
Secular Party of Australia

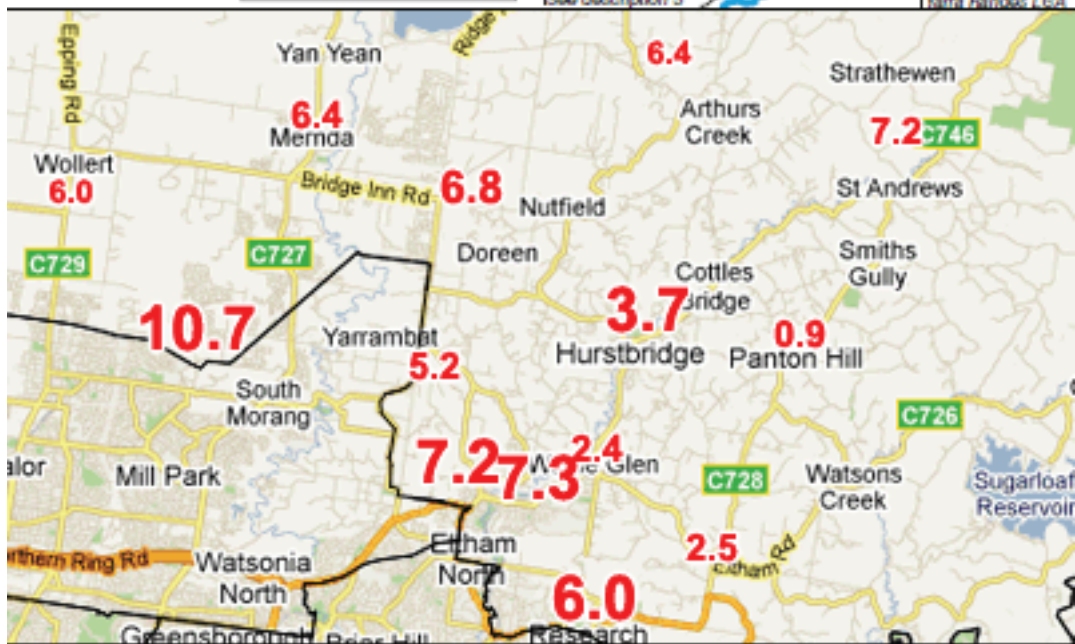
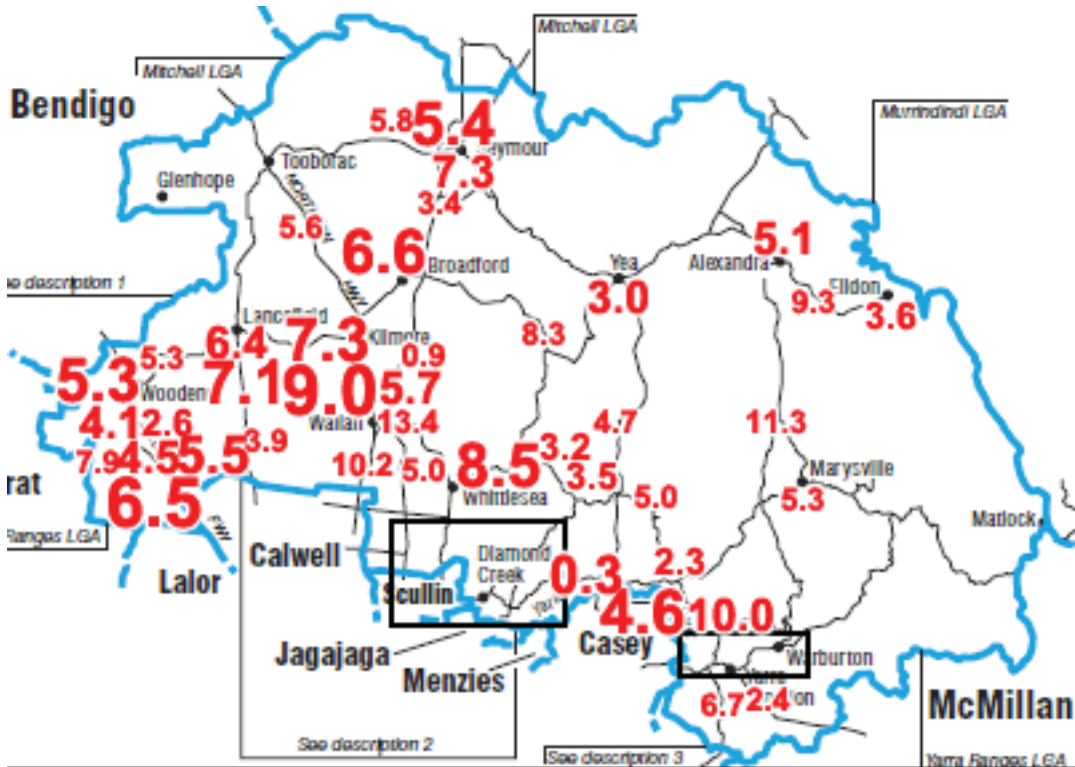
BELINDA CLARKSON
Family First



Two-party vote map



Swing % map



Electorate analysis:

McEwen extends from outer north-eastern suburbs of Melbourne including Healesville and Craigieburn deep into central Victoria, taking in Seymour and Eildon in the north. This closely corresponds with the area most heavily devastated by the February 2009 bushfires, the destroyed towns of Kinglake and Marysville being respectively located in the central south and east. The electorate was created with the expansion of parliament in 1984 and held for its first two terms by Labor's Peter Cleeland, who was unseated in 1990 by Fran Bailey as part of a statewide swing that cost Labor nine seats. Cleeland recovered the seat with a 0.7 per cent margin in 1993, but was again defeated by Bailey in 1996. As in so many other marginal seats, the swing to Labor in 1998 was well below the national average, a circumstance that allowed the Howard government to win re-election from a minority of the national two-party vote. After a slight swing to Bailey in 2001, the seat exited the marginal zone for the first time in 2004 following a 1.0 per cent redistribution boost and a 4.2 per cent swing.

Bailey was left with a 6.4 per cent margin going into the 2007 election, which she ended up needing every bit of. At first blush the result was the closest in any federal election since Ian Viner's 12-vote victory in the Perth seat of Stirling in 1974: Labor challenger Rob Mitchell won by seven votes on the first count, but a recount turned that to 12 in favour of Bailey. Labor launched a legal challenge against the result, complaining among other things that a ballot had been admitted on which the voter had crossed out the candidates' names and replaced them with those of V8 Supercar drivers. The Federal Court finally made its ruling on the case in July 2008, and proved even more liberal in its determinations than Labor had counted on: 142 votes that had originally been rejected were admitted on the basis that the numbers were "reasonably discernible". Unfortunately for Mitchell, 76 of these votes were for Bailey against 66 for himself, so that Bailey's official winning margin increased to 27.

Fran Bailey announced she would not contest the next election in October 2009, which disappointed Liberals who hoped the esteem she gained during the bushfire crisis would stand her in good stead. On that basis the party has done well to nominate Cameron Caine, a Kinglake police officer credited with saving several lives during the emergency, and who later became president of the Kinglake Football Club. Labor has again nominated Rob Mitchell, a Right faction member who held a seat for the state upper house province of Central Highlands from 2002 until he was frozen out by the electoral reforms that took effect in 2006.

Although he was said to maintain "strong local numbers", Mitchell was installed as candidate by the party's national executive. Another hopeful frozen out by the intervention was Andrew MacLeod, a former soldier and United Nations disaster expert who ran in 2001. Misha Schubert of *The Age* reported in October 2009 that deals had reserved the seat for the Right sub-faction associated with Stephen Conroy and Bill Shorten.

McEwen was covered by two composite marginal seat polls in the second last week of the campaign. Newspoll's survey of 600 voters across three Victorian marginals remarkably showed a swing to Labor of 6.2 per cent – at least 3 per cent higher than the statewide trend – while Galaxy's survey of 800 respondents in four seats had it at a far more modest 1.6 per cent.

Electorate: Sturt

Margin: Liberal 0.9%

Location: Inner Eastern Adelaide, South Australia

In a nutshell: Senior Liberal Christopher Pyne emerged from the 2007 election with a highly tenuous hold on a seat that had been in Liberal hands since 1972. His prospects of surviving the coming election have fluctuated with the Coalition's highly variable fortunes over the past term.

The candidates

DALE CLEGG

Family First

RICK SARRE

Labor (bottom)

JESS CLARK

Liberal Democrats

CHRISTOPHER PYNE

Liberal (top)

PETER FIEBIG

Greens

DARREN ANDREWS

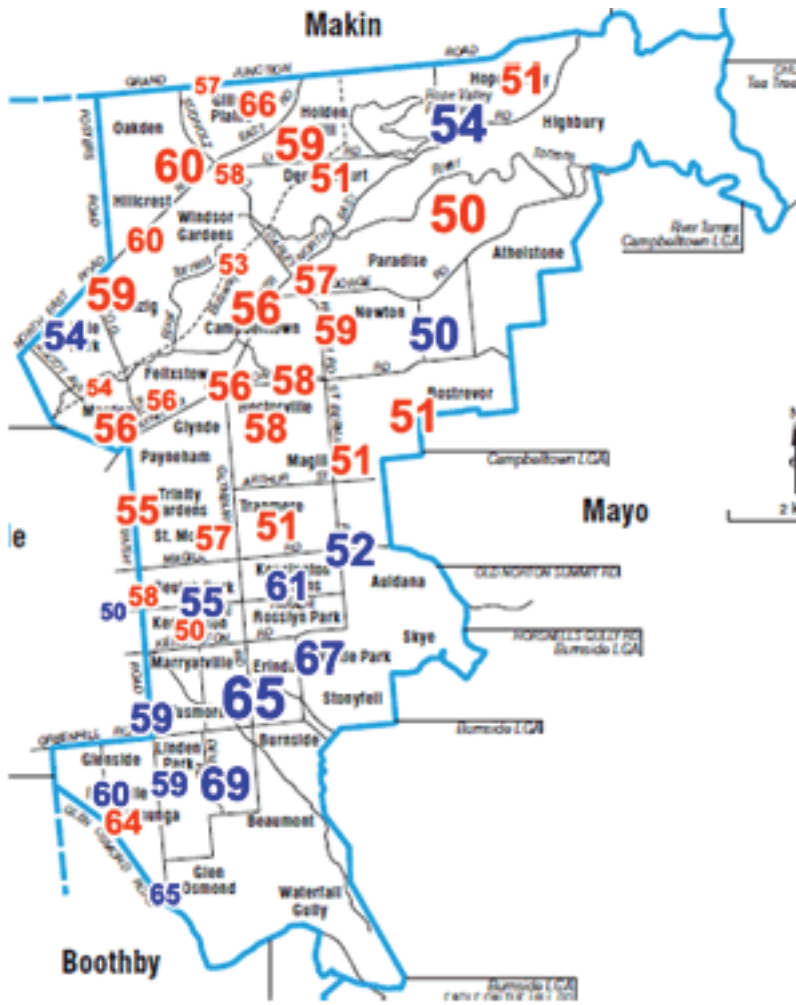
Australian Democrats

JACK KING

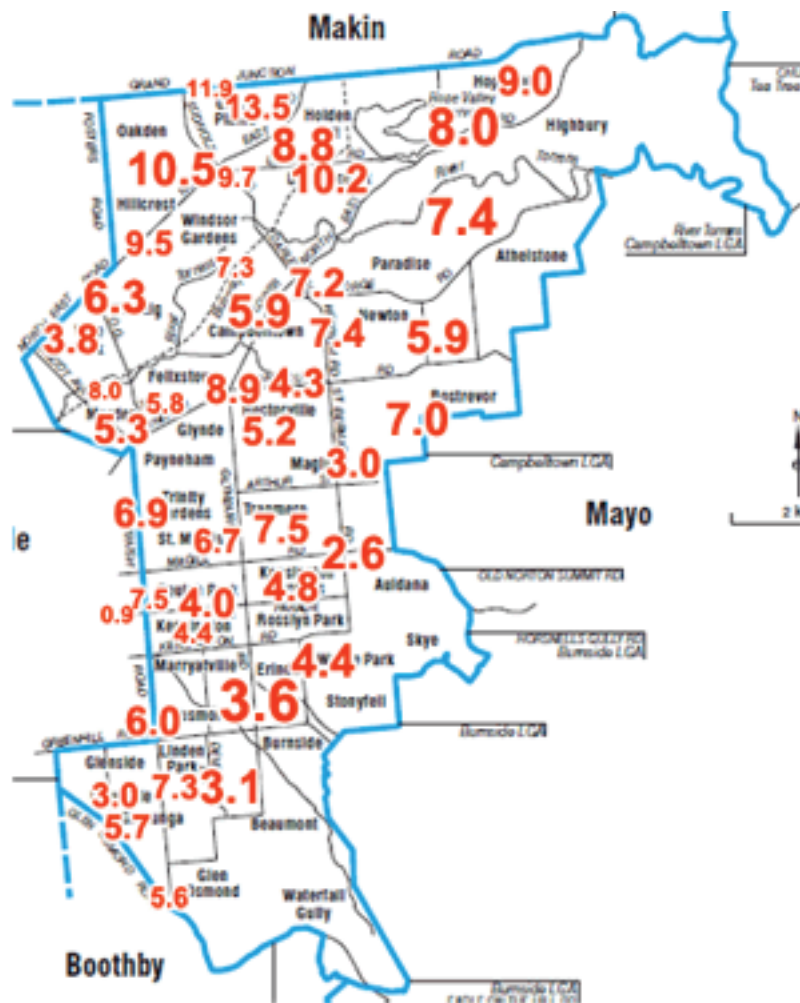
One Nation



Two-party vote map



Swing % map



Electorate analysis:

Sturt covers the inner eastern suburbs of Adelaide, including Payneham, Kensington, Tranmere and Skye east of the city, Klemzig, Campbelltown, Paradise and Highbury to the north, and Glenunga, Glen Osmond and Beaumont to the south. When created in 1949 it also covered the north of Adelaide, which after 1955 formed the basis of the new electorate of Bonython (which was abolished in 2004). The loss of this territory made Sturt notionally Liberal, prompting Labor member Norman Makin – who had gained the seat from the Liberals in 1954 – to contest the new seat. It has since been won by Labor only in 1969, when Norman Foster secured a narrow victory after a 15.0 per cent swing. The redistribution resulting from South Australia's loss of a seat in 2004 shifted the seat eastwards, adding the outer suburbs around Tea Tree Gully, formerly part of Mayo, and transferring territory closer to the city to Adelaide.

Sturt has been held for the Liberals since 1993 by Christopher Pyne, a former staffer to Senator Amanda Vanstone and soon to emerge as the most powerful South Australian figure in her moderate faction. Pyne was promoted to parliamentary secretary a year after entering parliament, and his failure to rise into the ministry until January 2007 was widely put down to his closeness to Peter Costello. After the 2007 election defeat he ran for the deputy leadership, finishing in third place with 18 votes behind Julie Bishop on 44 and Andrew Robb on 25. He has since served in high-profile positions on the opposition front bench: justice and border protection under Brendan Nelson, and education, apprenticeships and training under Malcolm Turnbull and Tony Abbott. He further gained the position of manager of opposition business in February 2009, to the chagrin of the Right.

It was long expected that the seat would again be contested for Labor by Mia Handshin, a former Young South Australian of the Year and founder of “inspirational speaking and consultancy group” Mana of Speaking, who had picked up a 5.9 per cent swing as candidate in 2007. After the election Handshin worked as a staffer to Sports Minister and member for Adelaide Kate Ellis and retained the patronage of Senator and Right powerbroker Don Farrell, leaving little doubt the nomination would be hers for the taking. However, she unexpectedly withdrew from the running in August 2009. Brad Crouch of the Sunday Mail reported the announcement came “within hours” of her being queried by the paper over her family’s involvement with a collapsed real estate group. Michael Owen of The Australian nonetheless reported speculation Handshin was to run for the state seat of Hartley and leave Sturt for its sitting member, Grace Portolesi – which Portolesi promptly denied. Christian Kerr in the same paper described Handshin as “potential premier”. In Handshin’s absence the Labor nomination has gone to Rick Sarre, professor of law and commerce at the University of South Australia.

In the second week of the campaign Julia Gillard announced \$100 million in funding for stormwater harvesting and reuse, the first cab off the rank being a \$10 million contribution to a pitch for \$33 million by councils in eastern Adelaide. With the councils to fund half the cost, this left a \$6 million hole which Labor wanted filled by a previously reluctant state government. The next day Tony Abbott trumped Labor by promising to put up the full \$16.5 million. The Coalition also promised \$7.5 million to improve Fosters and Gorge roads.

Late in the third week of the campaign The Advertiser published a poll showing Christopher Pyne with a 55-45 lead on two-party preferred and 49 per cent to 35 per cent on the primary vote, compared with 47.2 per cent and 41.5 per cent at the 2007 election. The Greens were on 10 per cent, up from 6.4 per cent in 2007. More happily for Labor, 44 per cent of respondents rated Julia Gillard stronger on the economy compared with 41 per cent for Tony Abbott, and as more honest by 46 per cent compared with 38 per cent for Abbott. The margin of error on the poll is about 4 per cent. In the second last week of the campaign the seat was one of four South Australian marginals covered by a Galaxy survey of 800 respondents, which showed no swing across the four.

Electorate: Solomon

Margin: Labor 0.2%

Location: Darwin/Palmerston, Northern Territory

In a nutshell: Darwin's diverse mix of demographic elements produces a highly marginal electorate, with the result being decided by 88 votes in 2001 and 196 votes in 2007. Damien Hale gained the seat for Labor on the latter occasion, and now faces a challenge from Palmerston deputy mayor Natasha Griggs.

The candidates

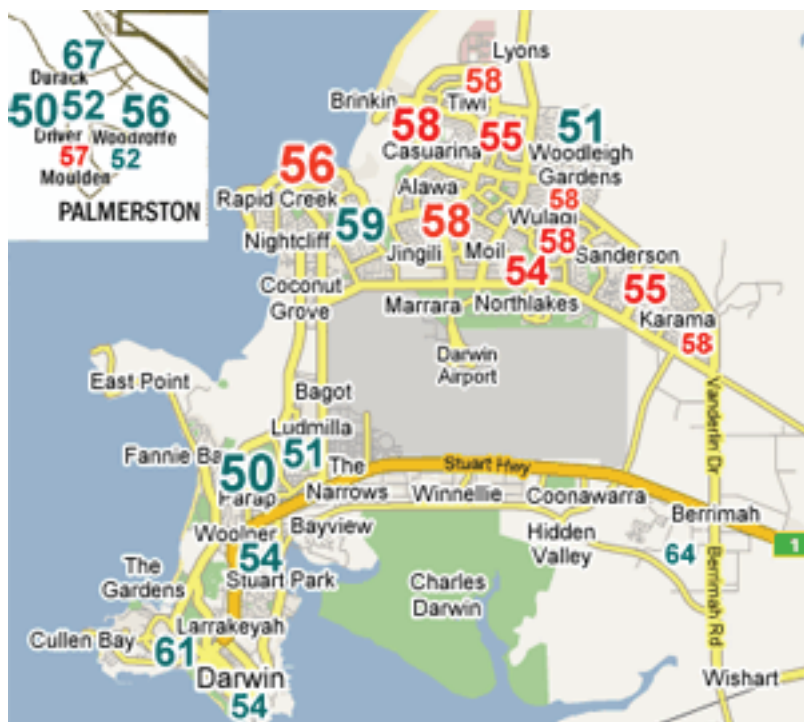


DAMIEN HALE
Labor

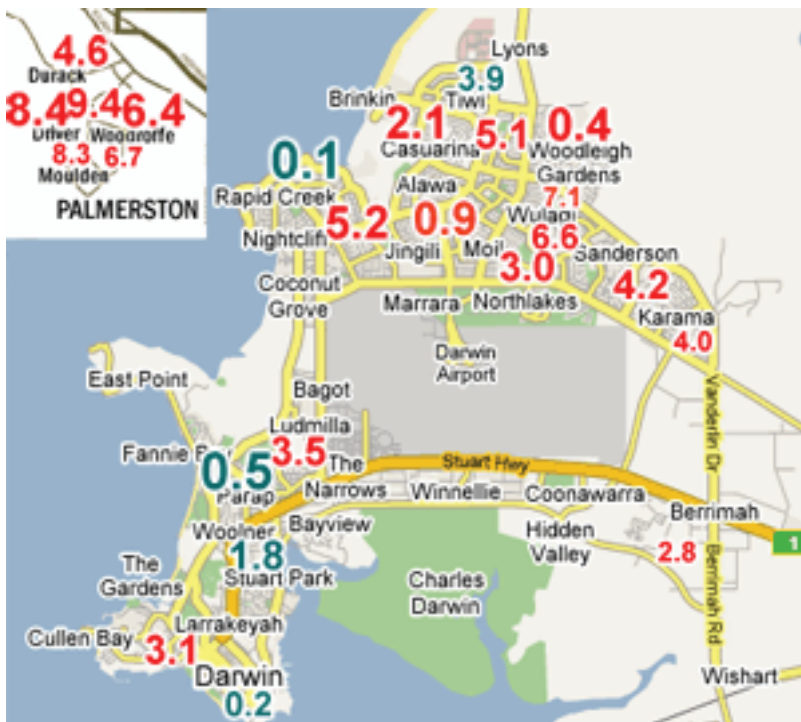


NATASHA GRIGGS
Country Liberal

Two-party vote map



Swing % map



Electorate analysis:

The Northern Territory recorded only a modest swing to Labor at the 2007 election, but it proved just sufficient to deliver them their first victory in the Darwin-and-Palmerston seat of Solomon. Created with the division of the Northern Territory into two electorates in 2001 (the remainder constituting Lingiari), Solomon's distinguishing demographic characteristics are a high proportion of indigenous persons (10.3 per cent in the 2006 census compared to a national figure of 2.3 per cent) and a low number of persons aged over 65 (5.3 per cent against 13.3 per cent).

Darwin is divided between newer Labor-leaning suburbs in the north, including Nightcliff, Casuarina, Jingili and Sanderson, and the town centre and its surrounds south of the airport, an area marked by higher incomes, fewer families and greater support for the CLP. Stronger still for the CLP is Palmerston, a satellite town established 20 kilometres south-east of Darwin in the 1980s that accounts for just over a quarter of the electorate's voters: it is less multicultural than Darwin and has a high proportion of mortgage-paying young families, no doubt explaining a particularly pronounced swing here in 2004. Swings to Labor at the 2007 election were around 7 per cent in Palmerston, lower in northern Darwin and non-existent around the city.

The Northern Territory gained its first member of federal parliament in 1922, but the member did not get full voting rights until 1968. Perhaps not coincidentally, the Northern Territory electorate had recently fallen to Sam Calder of the Country Party after a long period in Labor hands. With Calder's retirement in 1980, the seat transferred to the Country Liberal Party, established as a local alliance of Liberals and Nationals to contest elections in the newly established Northern Territory parliament. Labor gained the seat with the election of the Hawke government in 1983, defeating CLP member Grant Tambling (who returned as a Senator four years later). It subsequently changed hands with great frequency: future Chief Minister Paul Everingham recovered the seat for the CLP in 1984, Warren Snowdon won it back for Labor in 1987, Nick Dondas held it for the CLP for one term from 1996, and Snowdon recovered it in 1998.

Going into the 2001 election, the new seat of Solomon had a notional CLP margin of 2.3 per cent while Lingiari had a notional Labor margin of 3.7 per cent. Warren Snowdon naturally opted for the safer option of Lingiari, and Solomon emerged as an extremely tight contest between Labor's Laurene Hull and David

Tollner of the CLP. Tollner suffered a 2.2 per cent swing against the national trend, but was able to hang on by just 88 votes. The Northern Territory's hold on a second electorate looked set to be reversed at the 2004 election, when it was found to be 295 residents short of the required number. Since both major parties felt they could win them both (a more sound judgment in Labor's case), the second seat was essentially legislated back into existence. This has left the two Northern Territory electorates with by far the lowest enrolments in the country: at the time of the 2007 election, Solomon had 57,641 voters and Lingiari 60,404, compared with 70,000 for Tasmanian seats and a national average of around 90,000.

After a relatively comfortable win in 2004, Tollner was defeated at the 2007 election by 196 votes, returning to politics in the Territory parliament a year later as member for Fong Lim. The incoming Labor member was Damien Hale, former coach of the Northern Territory Football League club St Marys. Following on from the tough act of Tollner, Hale has maintained the rough-and-ready standards associated with Territory politics: in January he apologised for an "exchange" in a Darwin nightclub with an NTFL football club captain who said Hale "had a few too many drinks and was saying stuff he shouldn't". As of the end of 2009 he was the Labor member most frequently ejected from the House of Representatives by Speaker Harry Jenkins. In July last year he was served with a domestic violence order from his estranged wife, before the two agreed to what the Northern Territory News described as "a mutual order restricting each from assaulting, threatening, harassing or contacting the other for the next 12 months".

The Country Liberal Party has preselected Palmerston deputy mayor Natasha Griggs, said by the Northern Territory News to be a friend of Labor Chief Minister Paul Henderson. Griggs was chosen ahead of Darwin alderman Garry Lambert and Tourism Top End general manager Tony Clementson.



Marginal Seats

Stirling (WA)

- Coalition
 Labor
 Green
 Other

Cowper (NSW)

- Coalition
 Labor
 Green
 Other

Ryan (QLD)

- Coalition
 Labor
 Green
 Other

Bass (TAS)

- Coalition
 Labor
 Green
 Other

Hasluck (WA)

- Coalition
 Labor
 Green
 Other

Corangamite (VIC)

- Coalition
 Labor
 Green
 Other

Sturt (SA)

- Coalition
 Labor
 Green
 Other

Dickson (QLD)

- Coalition
 Labor
 Green
 Other

Paterson (NSW)

- Coalition
 Labor
 Green
 Other

Hughes (NSW)

- Coalition
 Labor
 Green
 Other

La Trobe (VIC)

- Coalition
 Labor
 Green
 Other

Macarthur (NSW)

- Coalition
 Labor
 Green
 Other

Gilmore (NSW)

- Coalition
 Labor
 Green
 Other

Bowman (QLD)

- Coalition
 Labor
 Green
 Other

McEwen (VIC)

- Coalition
 Labor
 Green
 Other

Herbert (QLD)

- Coalition
 Labor
 Green
 Other

Robertson (NSW)

- Coalition
 Labor
 Green
 Other

Solomon (NT)

- Coalition
 Labor
 Green
 Other

Macquarie (NSW)

- Coalition
 Labor
 Green
 Other

Swan (WA)

- Coalition
 Labor
 Green
 Other

Tie Breaker