



Polls strengthen Rudd's hand in carbon talks: Reuters Poll Trend

Opposition split on carbon issue but dare not trigger an election

Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd opened up his biggest poll lead in 18 months in October, strengthening his hand in negotiations with the opposition on the controversial carbon-trade laws.

The latest Reuters Poll Trend has found that Rudd's government had an 18-point lead over the opposition, with 59 percent support compared to the opposition's 41 percent on a two party basis.

The result comes as the prime minister negotiates with struggling opposition leader Malcolm Turnbull, who is keen to strike a deal on the carbon legislation and avoid the threat of a snap election.

The carbon laws have already been defeated once in parliament, in August. If rejected a second time by parliament's upper house in a vote due in November, Rudd would have the option of calling a snap election on the issue in an attempt to break the political deadlock.

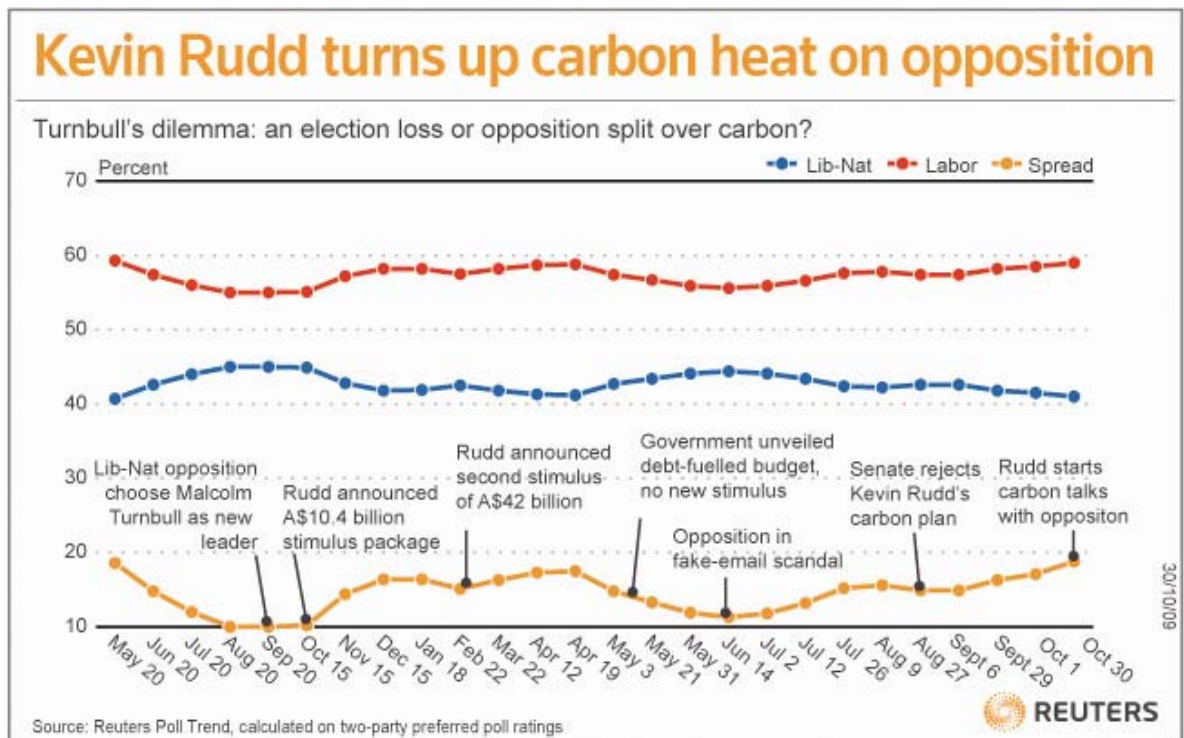
Rudd has played down the prospects of a snap election, but the latest Poll Trend result represents his largest lead since May 2008. If carried through to an election, his government would easily be returned with an increased majority, while the opposition would lose more than 20 seats.

The next regular Australian election is due toward the end of 2010.

The opposition remains deeply divided over climate policy, with the rural-based National Party firmly opposed to carbon trading and threatening to break with its larger opposition partners in the Liberal Party.

Rudd won the last election with 52.7 percent of the two-party vote. But his poll support has not dipped below last October's low of 54.7 percent since he took office.

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Latest results, in percent:

	Date	Primary			Two-party preferred			Preferred PM		
		Lib-Nat	Labor	Gap	Lib-Nat	Labor	Gap	Turnbull	Rudd	Gap
Poll Trend	Oct 30	35.0	48.2	13.3	41.0	59.0	18.0	19.9	66.9	46.9
3 Poll Avg	Oct 30	35.0	47.8	12.8	41.0	59.0	18.0	20.5	68.0	46.0
Newspoll	Oct 18	34.0	48.0	14.0	41.0	59.0	18.0	19.0	65.0	46.0
Morgan	Oct 11	34.0	49.5	15.5	39.0	61.0	22.0			
Nielsen	Oct 10	37.0	46.0	9.0	43.0	57.0	14.0	23.0	69.0	47.5
Essential	Oct 26	36.0	50.0	14.0	41.0	59.0	18.0			
Last Election	Nov 2007	41.8	43.4	1.6	47.3	52.7	5.4			

Making sense of opinion polls

The Reuters Poll Trend is not a poll; it is an analysis of the polls. Its object is to summarise the polls by compiling them and removing their volatility.

It starts by rolling the published data from the major polls into a fortnightly three-poll average, weighting them equally and the smoothing volatility by using a five-term Henderson moving average. The Henderson process dampens short-term up-and-down movement but aims to leave untouched the underlying drift in the data.

Although we think the Reuters Poll Trend is a valuable analytical tool, and we are very pleased to see it referred to in the media, we urge you to give credit to those who actually survey thousands of people: Morgan, Newspoll and Nielsen. Also, please refer to this as the Reuters Poll Trend, not the Reuters Poll. We haven't surveyed anyone.

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