



Make or break time for Opposition leader Turnbull: Reuters Poll Trend

Will shadow treasurer Joe Hockey be squaring off against PM Rudd at next election?

Australia's opposition leader Malcolm Turnbull has failed to make an impact in opinion polls a year into the job, the Reuters Poll Trend has found, adding pressure on his party to look for a replacement before the next election.

With Prime Minister Kevin Rudd continuing to raise the prospect of an early election over carbon trade laws, Turnbull's opposition remains 16 points behind on a two-party basis, with 42 percent support to the government's 58 percent.

That compares to a much smaller deficit of 10.1 percentage points when Turnbull replaced Brendan Nelson as opposition leader on September 16, 2008.

The findings, if carried through to an election, suggest Rudd would be returned with an increased majority.

Despite Turnbull's poll difficulties, the main opposition Liberal Party has few credible alternative leaders, now that former treasurer Peter Costello has resolved to quit politics.

Some lawmakers believe shadow treasurer Joe Hockey may one day be a leadership contender, while Costello has not yet resigned from parliament, making it possible he could still change his mind and challenge for the leadership.

Turnbull took over when Nelson's rating as preferred prime minister was a lowly 19 percent compared with Rudd's 63 percent. But the latest Poll Trend has Turnbull only marginally better at 19.5 percent, while Rudd's rating has climbed to 67 percent.

Rudd has played down the chances of a snap election, but he continues to taunt the opposition about the need to pass his carbon-trade laws, which have already been defeated once in parliament's upper house and are due to be debated again in the Senate in November.

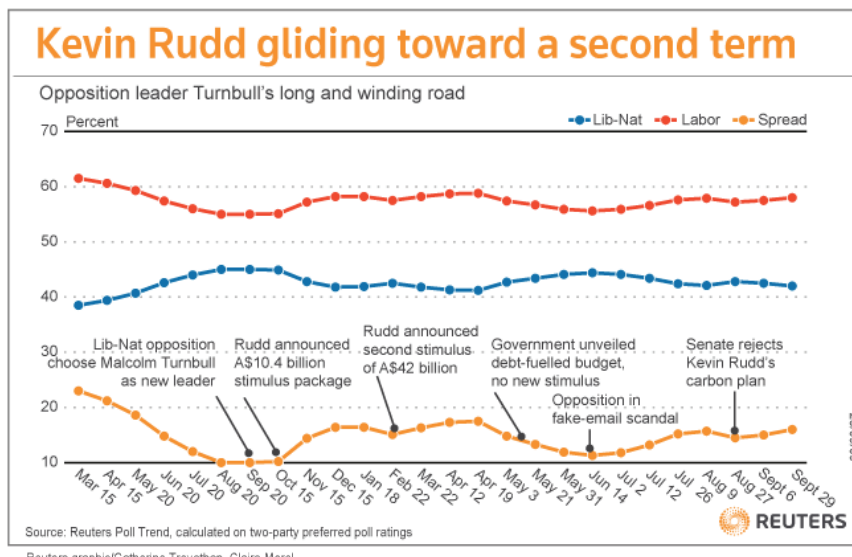
If the laws are rejected a second time in November, Rudd will have a legal trigger which will allow him to call an early election for both houses of parliament at any time.

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

Turnbull says he wants to negotiate amendments to the carbon-trade laws to avoid an early election, but the opposition is deeply divided over climate policy, which is shaping up as a major test of his leadership.

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.

James Grubel, Senior Political Correspondent, is available for interviews on 0411 659142





Latest results, in percent:

	Date	Primary			Two-party preferred			Preferred PM		
		Lib-Nat	Labor	Gap	Lib-Nat	Labor	Gap	Turnbull	Rudd	Gap
Poll Trend	Sep 28	36.6	46.6	10.0	42.0	58.0	16.0	19.5	67.0	47.5
3 Poll Avg	Sep 28	36.8	46.2	9.3	43.3	57.7	15.3	20.0	67.0	47.0
Newspoll	Sep 20	38.0	43.0	5.0	45.0	55.0	10.0	17.0	65.0	48.0
Morgan	Sep 13	32.5	51.5	19.0	37.0	63.0	26.0			
Nielsen	Sep 12	40.0	44.0	4.0	45.0	55.0	10.0	23.0	69.0	46.0
Essential	Sep 28	36.0	49.0	13.0	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.

About Thomson Reuters

Thomson Reuters is the world's leading information provider. We operate in over 93 countries, powering the global markets. Our information and proprietary content is used by every major financial institution and our news reaches over 1 billion people daily.

CONTACT

James Grubel
(O) 02 6273 2730 (M) 0411 659142
james.grubel@thomsonreuters.com

Mark Bendeich
(O) 02 9373 1817
mark.bendeich@thomsonreuters.com