



Australian PM Rudd bounces back in polls

Rudd rides higher on support for health reform

April 22, 2010

Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's push to reform the country's health system ahead of national elections has paid off in the opinion polls, with government support lifting from two-year lows.

The latest Reuters Poll Trend found Rudd's government has taken a 10.4-point lead over the opposition, with 55.2 percent support compared to the opposition's 44.8 percent on the two-party basis which decides Australian elections.

The result is a three-point improvement for the government since February, and shows Rudd's arm-wrestle with the states over hospital funding stalled an opposition revival, boosting Rudd's stocks ahead of a crucial budget session of parliament.

If the result carried through to a national election, Rudd's government would easily be returned with 16 more seats in the 150-seat lower house. This would give him a strong mandate to pass his stalled scheme to curb carbon emissions.

Rudd's centre-left government has been frustrated by an obstructionist upper house Senate where the opposition holds the largest voting bloc. He has been unable to deliver on key election promises, hurting his popularity in recent months.

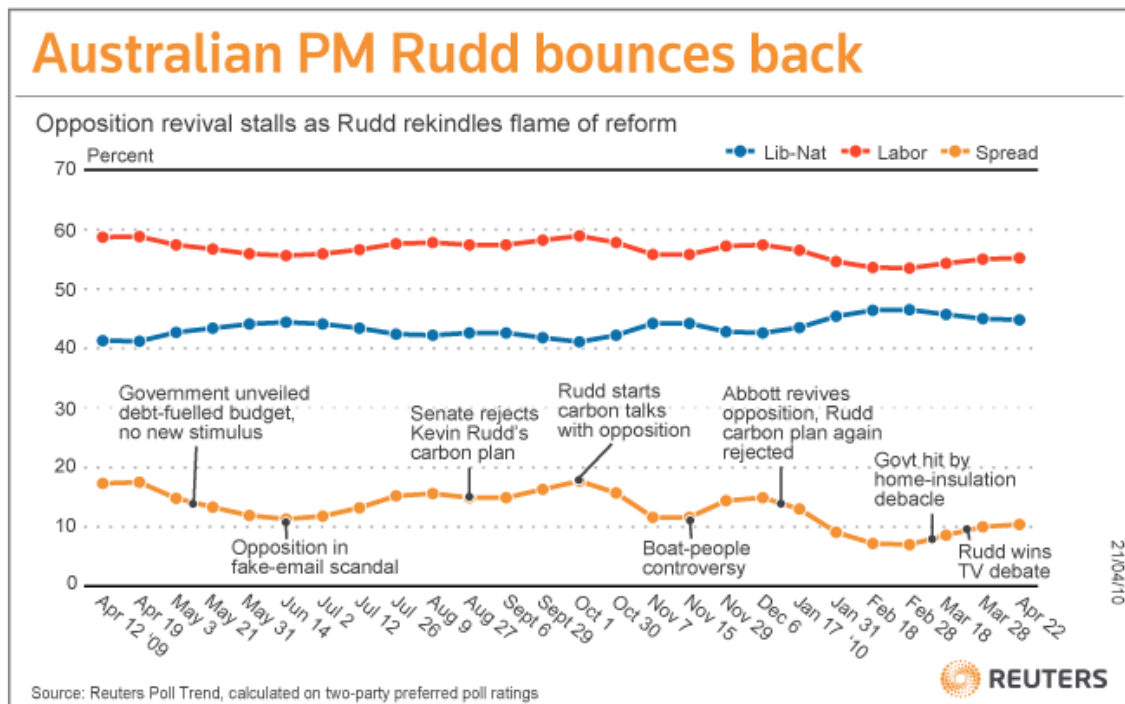
But Rudd won state backing for his health plans this week, and will now focus on tax reforms and the May 11 national budget, which will be his last major opportunity before an election to sell his credentials as an economic conservative.

The opposition remains opposed to many Rudd programmes and might use its Senate numbers to try to block the health reforms, forcing Rudd to seek support from the Greens and two independent senators.

The next regular Australian election is due toward the end of 2010. Rudd won the last election with 52.7 percent of the two-party vote.

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Latest results, in percent:

	Date	Primary			Two-party preferred			Preferred PM		
		Lib-Nat	Labor	Gap	Lib-Nat	Labor	Gap	Abbott	Rudd	Gap
Poll Trend	Apr 22	38.9	43.7	4.8	44.8	55.2	10.4	30.4	57.0	26.6
3 Poll Avg	Apr 22	39.5	43.3	3.8	45.7	54.3	8.7	31.5	57.5	26.0
Newspoll	Apr 18	40.0	43.0	3.0	46.0	54.0	8.0	29.0	56.0	27.0
Morgan	Apr 4	36.5	48.0	11.5	42.0	58.0	16.0			
Nielsen	Apr 17	42.0	39.0	-3.0	49.0	51.0	2.0	34.0	59.0	25.0
Essential	Apr 18	39.0	42.0	3.0	46.0	54.0	8.0			
Last Election	Nov 2007	41.8	43.4	1.6	47.3	52.7	5.4			

* All figures are rounded to one decimal place.

Rudd remains preferred Prime Minister with 57.0 percent support, down from a high of 70.7 in April 2008, compared to Abbott's 30.4 percent.

Making sense of opinion polls

The Reuters Poll Trend is an analysis of the polls, 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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