

Australian polls show Labor paving the way for a possible minority Coalition government

Mike Head
16 February 2025

A major polling result, released yesterday, indicates for the first time the likelihood that a far-right Liberal-National Coalition could form a minority government at the coming federal election, which must be held by May 17.

The YouGov survey, based on a far larger sample than corporate media polls, points to Coalition leader Peter Dutton being in a slightly stronger position than Prime Minister Anthony Albanese to cobble together such a government, depending on the support of a handful of parliamentary “crossbenchers.”

This underscores the reality that the ever-more right-wing, pro-business and pro-US militarism program of Albanese’s Labor government is opening the door for the return of the widely-reviled Coalition just three years after it was thrown out of office.

The YouGov poll projects that the Coalition could win 73 House of Representatives seats—short of the 76 needed to form a majority—with Labor trailing at 66 seats. On this scenario, independents would win eight and the Greens, Katter’s Australian Party and Centre Alliance a seat each.

This projection, if accurate, would mean that the Dutton-led Coalition would have to gain the support of at least two crossbench MPs to form what would be a fragile minority government.

On these results, Labor cannot form a majority government. To cling to office, Labor would have to haggle for the support of nearly every crossbencher in the lower house—an even more difficult and unstable prospect.

The data shows no widespread support for a Coalition-led government, however. That is despite the predicted loss of 15 seats by Labor in predominantly outer-suburban working-class areas. These electorates have been hardest hit by the cost-of-living and housing crisis that has produced an historic cut to working-class living conditions under Labor since it scraped into office in 2022.

The results show the Coalition increasing its vote share by only 1.7 points on the 2022 federal election result, taking it to 37.4 percent. That is even with Labor’s vote sharply declining further by 3.5 points to 29.1 percent—a new record low for Labor since World War II.

Independents rose by 3.6 points and the Greens 0.4 points.

That sent the combined vote for Labor and the Coalition—the two main parties of capitalist rule for decades—down to a new low of 66.5 percent. That means a deepening crisis of the entire political system.

These results remain highly uncertain. YouGov’s modelling overall projects a range of results, with the Coalition currently on course to secure between 65 and 80 seats, meaning a majority is not impossible. Labor could take 59-72 seats, the Greens 1-3, and Independents 7-10.

YouGov’s MRP model (short for multi-level regression with post-stratification) combines survey data with electorate-level information from the Census and other government agencies. It is based on a sample of 40,689 interviews, which is many times bigger than the media polls.

YouGov’s results indicate an even greater loss of Labor support than estimated by media polls. The latest Newspoll, published in the *Australian* today, said Labor’s primary vote had fallen to a record of 31 percent. That was despite a one-point fall in the Coalition’s primary vote to 38 percent, leaving a hung parliament the most likely outcome.

According to Newspoll, Albanese’s approval rating hitting a record low of minus 21, well below even that of Dutton, on minus 10.

Significantly, YouGov’s MRP method permits a drill down to individual electorates, producing a clearer picture of where the hostility to the Labor government has developed the most, particularly in working-class areas on the outskirts of Sydney, Melbourne and Newcastle, an industrial city north of Sydney.

Formerly “safe” Labor working class electorates in outer suburban Sydney and Melbourne are projected to see some of the largest swings against the party. For example, the western Sydney seat of Werriwa, held by Labor for decades, is set to be won by the Coalition on a swing of 5.9 percent.

In the Hunter Valley around Newcastle, Labor is projected to lose the partly coal mining-based seat of Hunter, which it has held since 1910, and the neighbouring constituencies of Shortland and Paterson.

These are among the areas where working-class households are suffering the greatest financial stress. According to a recent analysis, 82 percent of electorates nationally now have a majority of homes suffering household financial stress—10

times the level of 8 percent in 2021.

Yet this alone cannot explain the implosion of Labor's voting base. It has been particularly evident since the failure of one of the government's signature policies—its October 2023 constitutional referendum to establish an elite indigenous advisory body, called the Voice, in the heart of the parliamentary and government apparatus.

In that referendum, most working-class voters rejected the government's pretences that such a body would help address the appalling social conditions of many indigenous people, which are the result of continuing capitalist exploitation, when the living standards of all workers and youth were being slashed.

That vote also came just a week after the Labor government threw its support behind the US-backed Israeli genocide in Gaza. That alignment with mass murder further exposed Labor's intensifying commitment to US militarism, including its allocation of hundreds of billions of dollars for AUKUS submarines and other weaponry in preparation for war against China.

Since then, the Albanese government has only more blatantly aligned itself with Washington, now pledging full cooperation with the fascistic Trump administration, and joined hands with the Coalition repeatedly in a bipartisan front to ram through parliament reactionary legislation.

These laws have included huge tax handouts to billionaire-owned mining operations, boosts for wealthy property developers, punishing cuts to immigration and international students, and "hate speech" provisions designed to silence and criminalise criticism of the US-Israeli barbarism in Palestine.

These measures have combined an ever-closer partnership with the Coalition and soaring bipartisan support for the corporate elite—including the mining magnates—with a drive to scapegoat immigrants and demonise and victimise genocide opponents.

Parallel processes have been taking place internationally. In the US, the war-mongering Biden-Harris administration paved the way for Trump, the 2021 coup attempt leader, to return to the White House.

Labor has responded to Trump's win by seeking to outdo the Coalition in accommodating to and ingratiating itself with Trump, featuring Deputy Prime Minister Richard Marles's visit to Washington to shore up the military relationship, and Foreign Minister Penny Wong's attendance at Trump's inauguration, which she described as "an honour and a privilege.

A Labor loss at the election would make it the first single-term federal administration since 1931. That is a measure of the underlying popular disaffection with the political establishment as a whole, producing an historic crisis.

The Greens party, which has become a pillar of the parliamentary order over the past two decades, is pleading for a deal with Labor to prop up a minority government, as it did

with the Gillard Labor government in 2010.

One of the Greens' claims is that this is necessary to "keep out Dutton" and would be a "lesser evil" than a Coalition government, but the experience of 2010-13, and all the bitter political experiences since, have demonstrated the opposite.

Kept in office with the help of a deal with the now Greens leader, Adam Bandt, as well as three independent MPs, the Gillard government signed up to the Obama administration's military and strategic "pivot to Asia" to confront China, joined the deadly US military "surge" of thousands of troops into Afghanistan, and cut welfare and education spending.

That cleared the path for the return of the Coalition to further slash social spending under the widely-hated Tony Abbott and his ministers, who included Dutton, initially as health minister.

Political commentators in the Murdoch media and other outlets are voicing anxiety in ruling circles about the prospect of a brittle minority government today that would have difficulty in suppressing the resistance in the working class to the intensifying assault on living and working conditions.

Simon Benson, the *Australian's* political editor, today described a minority government as a "potential nightmare scenario." He further referred to a minority Coalition government as a "sort of Frankenstein's monster."

Workers and young people opposed to the genocide, war and massive social inequality need to draw the necessary conclusions from this historic political crisis. A socialist and revolutionary perspective is required to halt the descent into barbarism produced by the bankrupt capitalist economic and social order.

As the Socialist Equality Party has warned, what is underway is "a dramatic change in the political forms of rule by the capitalist ruling class, not just in the US but globally. The financial-corporate oligarchy is attempting to reorganise the world, including Australia, by means of social counterrevolution and political dictatorship.

"That will provoke immense struggles by workers and youth on a global scale but to defeat the threat of fascism and world war there must be a corresponding shift in understanding what humanity confronts. What is required is the conscious, revolutionary intervention of the working class on the basis of a socialist and internationalist program to overturn world capitalism."



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact