

Australian election highlights mass opposition to Trump globally

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Saturday's Australian federal election was another indication of mass hostility on a global scale to the fascistic US President Donald Trump, and the agenda with which he is associated of trade war, militarism, an onslaught on democratic rights and the open rule of an oligarchy.

The election resulted in a victory for the incumbent Labor Party and a wipeout of the opposition Liberal-National Coalition to a near rump. Vote counting is still underway, but Labor will hold more than 86 positions in the 150-seat lower house of parliament, giving it a majority government, while the Coalition is likely to secure fewer than 45 seats. Coalition leader Peter Dutton was among as many as 14 Liberal-National MPs to lose their seat.

With support from the Greens, Labor will also probably control the Senate, the upper house of parliament.

The outcome defied the predictions of most media commentators, as well as the opinion polls, both of which had been forecasting a hung parliament and a minority Labor or Coalition government.

It did, however, follow a similar result to the Canadian election where the Liberal Party retained office despite poor polling, because of opposition to the Conservative Party's identification with Trump.

Similarly, the fundamental change that occurred in Australia was a growing popular anxiety and hostility to Trump. When he won the US election in November, polling indicated that around 40 percent of the population was fearful of Trump.

By mid-way through the Australian election campaign that figure approached 70 percent, with respondents expressing fear that the global trade war unleashed by Trump would result in economic crisis, as well as concerns that his militarist policies heightened the threat of geopolitical conflict and war.

Already an attempt is underway by Labor and the corporate media to present the result as the outcome of a masterful campaign led by Prime Minister Anthony Albanese.

The reality is that Labor ran a "small target" campaign, outlining hardly any new policies. Those that it did unveil, such as a \$5 a week tax cut, were pitiful amid the deepest cost-of-living crisis in decades.

Together with the Coalition, Labor sought to exclude the global upheavals from the official campaign, absurdly claiming

that Australia was "uniquely placed" to deal with their fallout.

But Labor did nod to popular anti-Trump sentiment, depicting Dutton as an "aggressive" and "unreliable" figure, who would seek to "Americanise" the already crisis-ridden public health system with cuts and who would be erratic on foreign policy. This was despite Albanese's public declarations that he would not comment on anything Trump did or said.

The Coalition campaign was shambolic. Trump loomed large, with some commentators noting that there were three candidates in the race, Albanese, Dutton and Trump, with the latter's "shadow" damaging the Coalition.

In the lead-up to the election, Dutton had hailed Trump as a "a big thinker and deal maker." He had declared that he would be better placed to work with Trump due to shared ideological affinities.

But Coalition policies that smelt of Trumpism were widely unpopular and were either openly shelved or tacitly abandoned. The Coalition withdrew a promise to slash over 40,000 federal jobs, which was modelled on Trump and Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency. It scuttled threats to force public servants to end working-from-home arrangements.

Media reports indicated the Coalition was planning to unveil a Trumpian referendum on stripping the citizenship of dual citizens convicted of criminal offences, but no announcement was made. Dutton sought to avoid mention of his program to build an Australian nuclear power sector, which was associated with an attack on renewable energies and raised the spectre of eventual domestic nuclear weapons production.

The backflips meant that the Coalition campaign was incoherent. Even as Dutton sought to distance himself from Trump, leading National MP Jacinta Price declared at a campaign event standing alongside Dutton that together they would "make Australia great again."

Popular antipathy to Trump intersected with and deepened an existential crisis of the Coalition that was evident in its 2022 federal election defeat. The Coalition 2025 election vote was even lower than in that historic loss. At around 32 percent of primary votes, it is the worst result in the Coalition's history extending back to the 1940s.

The Liberals, the urban contingent of the Coalition and the traditional conservative party of the ruling elite, now have

virtually no presence in the capital cities. They are set to secure only four, possibly five seats in Sydney, the most populous city in the country, as few as three in Melbourne and no seats in Tasmania or Adelaide, the capital of South Australia.

The Teal independents appear to have consolidated their hold over “blue-ribbon” seats in Sydney and Melbourne, which the Liberals had historically dominated prior to 2022. The Teals combine genuflections to environmental concerns and identity politics, with vehement support for pro-business free market policies.

The result underscores the collapse of the Coalition as a “broad church” conservative party. Due to the Liberal wipeout, the regional Nationals, who often tend towards right-wing populism, will have a greater preponderance. What were once the “moderate” Liberals are essentially outside the Coalition in the form of the Teals.

The strengthening of the right-wing in the Coalition occurs under conditions of a massive rejection of its program. Not only the Coalition, but far-right parties, such as One Nation, either received negligible gains in the election or went backwards.

The Coalition debacle has been used to cover up the fact that Labor’s primary vote remains near historic lows.

The Labor primary vote was only 2 percent higher than in 2022, its lowest result since the 1930s. In this election, the combined vote of Labor and the Coalition was the lowest ever. The dominant tendency has not been a mass shift to Labor, but the disintegration of the Coalition.

In addition to the Coalition crisis, Labor was the beneficiary of support from the official “left.” The Greens campaigned for a coalition government with Labor, which they absurdly claimed would begin a “golden era” of “progressive reforms.”

The Greens have lost at least two of their four lower house seats, with that of party leader Adam Bandt still in jeopardy. The party has blamed Liberal-Labor preferencing arrangements. But, to the extent that the Greens were almost exclusively campaigning for a Labor government, there was little appeal for people to vote for them rather than directly for Labor. Their decline also reflected their rightward lurch which saw them promote a war policy and drop almost all criticism of the Labor government for its support for the genocide in Gaza.

The pseudo-left groups trailed behind, calling for a Labor vote on the bogus grounds that it was a lesser evil. The corporatised union bureaucracy sought to cover up Labor’s imposition of the biggest reversal to working-class living standards in decades over the past three years, calling for its re-election.

Much of the corporate media joined this lineup. Speaking for the ruling class, they increasingly swung behind Labor as the party most likely to avoid the instability of a minority government.

That was combined with a continuous discussion in the financial press, of the need for the next government to implement sweeping cuts to social services, to pay for the

budget deficit and for a massive increase in military spending. The necessity for Labor to proceed with this onslaught on the working class is already the dominant theme of the official coverage.

Labor has signalled its intent to deliver. Treasurer Jim Chalmers has declared that “productivity,” a codeword for intensified exploitation of the working class, will be the administration’s overwhelming policy. Albanese is predicted to meet with Trump in the coming weeks, where he will deepen Australia’s commitment to the US war drive against China, which was a central focus of Labor’s first term.

Despite the confected media hype, this is a government on a collision course with the working class. To the extent that broad sections of the population had illusions that repudiating Dutton and the Coalition might spare them major attacks on social conditions and stepped-up militarism, they are in for a sharp shock.

That underscores the crucial importance of the campaign waged by the Socialist Equality Party. Against the bogus lesser-evilism peddled by the Greens and the pseudo-left, the SEP exposed the pro-war and pro-business programs of Labor and the Coalition. Against the lies of Australian exceptionalism, it explained that developments in this country would be determined by the deepest breakdown of global capitalism since the 1930s.

And it insisted that the decisive task was building the SEP as the revolutionary leadership in the working class for the massive social struggles that are on the agenda. That task is the urgent order of the day.



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