

Barton Deakin Brief: 2019 Federal Election Snapshot

11 April 2019

Overview

The Prime Minister the Hon Scott Morrison MP today announced that he has advised the Governor-General, His Excellency General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC to call an election, to be held on Saturday, **18 May 2019**.

The 2019 Federal Election will see the incumbent Liberal-National Coalition Government seeking a third term in office against the current Opposition, the Australian Labor Party. To form government, a party or coalition must command a 76 seat majority in the House of Representatives.

Opinion polls continue to show the Coalition behind Labor, but the reception to the recent Budget has been positive and the focus on marginal seats has become more intense.

The Prime Minister has stated that economic management will be the key issue, while the Opposition leader has nominated fairness.

Timetable

Issue of the writs	11 April
Close of the rolls	18 April
Close of nominations	23 April
Polling day	18 May
Return of writs (latest date)	28 June

Caretaker Period

Under Caretaker Conventions, once an election has been called and the House of Representatives has been dissolved, the business of Government continues, and ordinary matters of administration area addressed. However, 'caretaker conventions' are observed to ensure that incoming governments are not limited in their freedom of action. These conventions involve the cessation of major policy decisions, significant appointments and entering major contracts or undertakings. Furthermore, advertising and information campaigns are halted to avoid the incumbent government receiving advantage from Commonwealth resources.

To view the Prime Minister and Cabinet's *Guidance on Caretaker Conventions*, click [here](#).



House of Representatives

Currently, the House of Representatives has 150 seats, of which the Coalition hold 74, Labor 69, and Independents/Minor parties 7.

The Australian Electoral Commission has announced that the House of Representatives is set to expand, in net terms, by one seat at this election to 151 seats.

Relative population changes will see seats created in the ACT (Bean) and Victoria (Fraser), and one seat has been abolished in South Australia (Port Adelaide). The new seats, based on existing voting patterns, are expected to be Labor.

The redistribution in Victoria also means that two current Coalition seats (Corangamite and Dunkley in Victoria) start as notionally Labor seats going into this election.

Seat name changes

The Australian Electoral Commission has renamed seven seats:

Old name	New name
Denison	Clark
Batman	Cooper
Melbourne Ports	Macnamara
McMillan	Monash
Murray	Nicholls
Wakefield	Spence

Current Opinion Polls

Poll	Date	Two-party Preferred		Primary Vote		Preferred PM	
		Coalition	ALP	Coalition	ALP	Morrison	Shorten
Newspoll	8 April	48	52	38	37	46	35
Fairfax Ipsos	7 April	47	53	37	34	46	35
Galaxy	25-28 March	47	53	33	34		
Roy Morgan	8 April	47.5	52.5	37	35		
Essential	9 April	48	52	38	35		

The ABC's election analyst Antony Green has a swing calculator – translating swing percentages into seat numbers - for the 2019 Federal election, which can be accessed [here](#).



Seats to Watch

Liberal/National Party Coalition

Electorate	State	Margin**
Capricornia	QLD	0.6
Forde	QLD	0.6
Gilmore	NSW	0.7
Flynn	QLD	1
Robertson	NSW	1.1
Banks	NSW	1.4
Dickson	QLD	1.7
Petrie	QLD	1.7
Hasluck	WA	2.1
Page	NSW	2.3
Boothby	SA	2.7
La Trobe	VIC	3.2
Bonner	QLD	3.4
Dawson	QLD	3.4
Pearce	WA	3.6
Swan	WA	3.6
Leichhardt	QLD	4
Casey	VIC	4.5
Reid	NSW	4.7
Sturt	SA	5.4
Brisbane	QLD	6
Flinders	VIC	7
Warringah	NSW	11.1

Australian Labor Party

Electorate	State	Margin**
Herbert	QLD	0.02
Corangamite*	VIC	0.03
Cowan	WA	0.7
Longman	QLD	0.8
Dunkley*	VIC	1.0
Lindsay	NSW	1.1
Macnamara	VIC	1.2
Griffith	QLD	1.4
Macquarie	NSW	2.2
Braddon	TAS	2.3
Eden-Monaro	NSW	2.9
Lyons	TAS	3.8
Dobell	NSW	4.8
Bass	TAS	5.4

Electorate	State	Margin**
Wentworth (IND)	NSW	1.22
Chisholm (IND)	VIC	2.9
Indi (IND)	VIC	4.1
Mayo (CA)	SA	7.5

* Notionally Labor-held seat after 2018 boundary redistribution.

** Two-party preferred based on 2016/by-election preference flows as per 2018 boundary redistribution.



The Senate

The 18th of May will also be the date of a half-Senate election.

The Senate has 76 Senators, half of whom are continuing through their six-year term.

The current Senate is comprised of 31 Coalition, 26 Labor, 9 Greens, 2 One Nation, 2 Centre Alliance, and one each of Liberal Democrats (Duncan Spender), Derryn Hinch, Australian Conservatives (Cory Bernardi), Fraser Anning, Tim Storer, United Australia Party (Brian Burston).

The minor party/independent representation in the Senate may be reduced at this election because the threshold for election increases from 1/13 (7.7%) of a state's vote to 1/7 (14.3%) of a state's vote.

Predicting Senate seats is difficult, but independents/minor parties are likely to have enough numbers to continue to play a critical role in passing, voting down or shaping legislation, whether the government is Coalition or Labor.

Key Election Themes

The Coalition Government used the early [2019-20 Federal Budget](#) delivered on 2 April 2019 to outline several of its key policies. Similarly, Labor presented a number of their policies in the Budget-In-Reply Speech on 4 April. The key battleground areas for the 2019 election include tax and economic management, infrastructure, health, environment and energy and border protection.

To read Barton Deakin's brief on the 2019-20 Budget, click [here](#).

Tax and Economic Management

The Coalition will seek to emphasise their record of economic management and commitment to lowering taxes for low- and middle-income Australians. The provision of tax offsets to lower income brackets and increasing tax thresholds will be highlighted as features of the policy.

The Coalition will also emphasise the significance of the projected surplus of \$7.1 billion in the 2019-20 financial year.

Labor's proposals to reduce the value of negative gearing and franking credits will continue to be a key point of contention between the parties.

Infrastructure

The Budget saw a commitment of \$23 billion in infrastructure spending over the 2019-20 Budget by the Coalition, with total Government spending on infrastructure in the next decade to exceed \$100 billion.

Key investment projects include a new Road Safety Package, a fast rail strategy which will establish a fast train network between Melbourne and Geelong and plans \$14.5 million to explore rail links



between key regional and metropolitan areas, an Urban Congestion Fund to target high-density traffic areas, an increase in funding for the Roads of Strategic Importance program, additional funding for the Building Better Regions Fund, further upgrades to the M1, funding for the Suburban roads upgrade scheme in northern Victoria, upgrades to the Bruce Highway in Queensland and funding for the North-South Corridor in South Australia.

Funding for infrastructure projects by state can be found on page 12 of the [Barton Deakin brief](#).

The Opposition have stated that their infrastructure policy will not focus on short term investment. They have committed to matching the Coalition on infrastructure spending in Queensland, promised funding for the Western Sydney Metro and the Cross-River Rail Project in Brisbane.

Health

The main priorities of the Coalition's health policy are investment in primary care, increased funding for hospitals, medicines, and alleviating out-of-pocket costs for patients. The Government earmarked \$81.8 billion for the health sector over the 2019-20 period.

The Opposition have also concentrated on health spending as a major policy platform, stating that they will end the Medicare rebate freeze and focus on a targeted 'Medicare Cancer Plan'.

Environment and Energy

Several renewable energy initiatives have been announced by the Coalition Government in the lead up to the election. These initiatives have focused improving the affordability and reliability of energy. This includes a \$1.4 billion investment into the [Snowy Hydro 2.0 scheme](#) which will generate 2000MW of energy to the grid.

The Coalition have also committed \$2 billion to the Climate Solutions Fund to help Australia continue to meet emissions reduction targets. To read more about the Government's Climate Solutions Package, click [here](#).

Labor will concentrate on its more ambitious targets for emissions reduction (45 per cent reduction to pollution on 2005 levels by 2030 and zero net pollution by 2050) and renewable energy (50 per cent renewable energy by 2030). Their Climate Change Action Plan policy, which includes a plan for 50 per cent of new cars to be electric-powered by 2030 and discount finance for manufacturing electric cars will also be points of difference.

Border Security

The Coalition have maintained their policy on strengthening Australia's borders, predominantly through Operation Sovereign Borders. The integrity of the immigration system has been identified as a priority for the Coalition, and policies such as offshore processing and Temporary Protection Visas remain at the centre of border protection policy.

The Coalition will be seeking to capitalise on concerns about Labor's commitment to border protection.



Further Information

Barton Deakin will provide a range of briefs in the lead up to the 2019 Federal election. You can sign up to the distribution of our briefs [here](#).

Barton Deakin has also produced a brief on the [2019-20 Federal Budget](#), which highlights the policy and funding commitments of the Coalition Government.

If you require any further information on the 2019 Federal Election, please don't hesitate to contact [David Alexander](#) on +61 457 400 524, [Grahame Morris](#) on +61 411 222 680 or [Georga Nonnenmacher](#) on +61 457 662 422.