

## **Barton Deakin Brief: 2023 NSW Election Preview**

**6 March 2023**

The 2023 New South Wales (NSW) State Election will be held on Saturday 25 March 2023, with the incumbent Liberal-National Coalition Government seeking a fourth term in office following its victories at the 2011, 2015 and 2019 state elections.

On 29 March 2022 the NSW Government entered its twelfth year and became the longest serving Liberal National Coalition government in NSW history, surpassing the Askin/Lewis/Willis era (May 1965 to May 1976), although that period was over four election victories.

The Coalition is led by the Premier and Leader of the NSW Parliamentary Liberal Party, the Hon. Dominic Perrottet MP. The Opposition is led by the Leader of the NSW Labor Party, Chris Minns MP.

The NSW Government entered caretaker mode on Friday 3 March.

This Barton Deakin Brief previews the 2023 NSW State Election.

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### **Electoral System**

Under the NSW Constitution, elections are held on the fourth Saturday in March every four years.

NSW is divided into 93 electorates, with one representative elected from each electorate to the Legislative Assembly, the Lower House.

The 42 members of the Legislative Council, the Upper House, represent NSW as a whole across an eight-year term. At each state election, half these members retire and an election is held for 21 positions.

NSW has compulsory voting. Optional preferential ballots are conducted in single-member [electorates](#) for the Legislative Assembly, and across the entire state for the proportionally elected Legislative Council.



## Current NSW Parliamentary Composition

At the 2019 NSW State Election, the Liberal and National Parties (the “Coalition”) received 52% of the state-wide two-party preferred vote, winning 48 seats (The Liberal Party won 35 seats and The Nationals 13 seats) to the Labor Party’s 36 seats in the Legislative Assembly. The result represented a 2.3% two-party preferred swing to Labor since the 2015 election.

As a result of resignations and by-elections since 2019, the Coalition now holds 45 seats in the Legislative Assembly. The Liberal Party lost the Bega by-election to Labor. Two Liberal members’ suspension (Members of Parliament (MPs)) for Drummoyne and Kiama) boosted the crossbench to nine members (including three Green MPs), with Labor holding its 37 seats.

Majority government requires 47 seats.

For the 2023 NSW Electoral Pendulum depicting the margin of each seat, please click [here](#).

In the Legislative Council, the Coalition currently holds 18 of 42 seats while the Labor Party holds 14 seats. 9 of the Coalition’s Upper House seats are up for re-election. The next NSW government will need to negotiate in the Upper House with minor parties The Greens, the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party (SFF) and Pauline Hanson’s One Nation. The Greens hold 3 seats in the Legislative Council, while Animal Justice, One Nation and SFF currently hold two seats each, with 2 Independents.

The current composition of the NSW parliament is summarised in the following table:

Party	Legislative Assembly	Legislative Council
<b>Liberal/National Coalition</b>	<b>33/12 (45)</b>	<b>11/6 (17)</b>
Labor	37	14
Greens	3	3
Shooters, Fishers and Farmers (SFF)	-	2
One Nation	-	2
Animal Justice Party	-	2
Independent	8	2
<b>Total:</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>42</b>

## By-elections

Since the election of the Coalition Government in 2019, one of 4 by-elections resulted in a change of party, in the seat of Bega.



Seat	By-election date	Former Member	Party Affiliation	New Member	Party Affiliation	Old Margin	New Margin
Bega	12 Feb. 2022	Andrew Constance	Liberal Party	Michael Holland	Labor Party	+6.9%	+5.1%

## Party Leaders

### Liberal Party – the Hon Dominic Perrottet MP (Premier)

Dominic Perrottet was first elected to the NSW State Parliament in March 2011 in the seat of Castle Hill, then successfully stood for Hawkesbury in March 2015. Mr Perrottet is currently the Member for Epping, having held the seat since March 2019. Mr Perrottet was elected leader of the NSW Parliamentary Liberal Party following a party ballot on 5 October 2021 and was sworn in as Premier the same day. Before entering politics, Mr Perrottet worked as a commercial lawyer for Henry Davis York and was President of the NSW Young Liberals in 2005.

Mr Perrottet first joined the frontbench in 2014 as Minister for Finance, Services and Property in the Baird Grant Coalition Government, and was appointed in 2017 Treasurer and Minister for Industrial Relations in the Berejiklian Barilaro Government, serving in that role until 2019 and then solely as Treasurer until his appointment as Premier in 2021.

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### Labor Party – Mr Chris Minns MP (Opposition Leader)

Chris Minns was elected Leader of the NSW Labor Party and NSW Opposition unopposed in June 2021, replacing former Labor leader Jodi McKay. Before entering politics, Mr Minns studied at the University of New England and at Princeton, later working for a youth mental health organisation, as a firefighter, a political advisor and as the Assistant Secretary of the NSW Labor Party. He was elected to the Hurstville City Council in 2004, later serving as Deputy Mayor in 2007 and 2008.

Mr Minns was elected to represent Kogarah in March 2015, and served as Shadow Minister for Transport and Corrections in 2018, resigning in May 2021 in protest at a critical document circulated through the Labor Party by then Deputy Opposition Leader Yasmin Catley.

### NSW Nationals – the Hon Paul Toole MP (Deputy Premier)

The Leader of the NSW Nationals and Deputy Premier of NSW, Paul Toole, was first elected to the NSW Parliament as the Member for Bathurst in March 2011. Prior to entering politics, Mr Toole worked as a teacher and was elected to the Evans Shire and Bathurst Regional Councils before becoming deputy mayor and then mayor in 2007.



From 2017 to 2019 Mr Toole served in the Berejiklian Barilaro Government as Minister for Racing and Minister for Lands and Forestry, then as Minister for Regional Transport and Roads from 2019 until 2021 as well as Deputy Leader of the NSW Nationals. Since October 2021, Mr Toole has served since December 2021 as Deputy Premier, Leader of the NSW Nationals and Minister for Regional New South Wales, as well as Minister for Police.

### Retiring Members of NSW Parliament

In the lead up to the 2023 State Election, 18 sitting members have announced that they will not be recontesting their seats:

Ten sitting members of the Liberal Party:

- Kevin Conolly (Riverstone)
- The Hon Victor Dominello (Ryde)
- The Hon David Elliott MP (Castle Hill)
- Melanie Gibbons MP (Holsworthy)
- The Hon Shelley Hancock MP (South Coast)
- The Hon Brad Hazzard MP (Wakehurst)
- The Hon Geoff Lee MP (Parramatta)
- The Hon Jonathan O’Dea (Davidson)
- The Hon Rob Stokes MP (Pittwater), and
- The Hon Gabrielle Upton MP (Vaucluse)

Three sitting members of the NSW Nationals:

- Stephen Bromhead MP (Myall Lakes)
- Chris Gulaptis MP (Clarence), and
- The Hon Melinda Pavey MP (Oxley)

Three sitting members of the Labor Party:

- Nick Lalich MP (Cabramatta)
- The Hon Paul Lynch MP (Liverpool), and
- Guy Zangari MP (Fairfield)

One sitting member of The Greens:

- Jamie Parker MP (Balmain)

One Independent:

- John Sidoti MP (Drummoyne)



## Key Election Policies and Initiatives

The NSW Liberal Party's [Plan to Keep NSW Moving Forward](#) has the following policy priorities, building on the government's delivered achievements:

- Growing our economy
- Reducing Pressure on Household Budgets
- Investing in our Frontline Services
- Building for the Future: continuing to invest in roads, rail, schools, and hospitals, and
- Empowering Local Communities

The NSW Nationals' [Putting Regional People First 2023 Plan](#) focuses on further improvements in regional roads and rail, stronger country communities, regional education and training, and water safety.

Key government election policies and initiatives are identified below.

### Transport and Infrastructure

With reducing cost of living pressures a continuing focus, the NSW Coalition's initiatives offer further relief from motorway tolls and accelerating infrastructure construction.

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The Coalition is committed to:

- Building the North Sydney to northern beaches tunnel;
- Building **four** new metro lines in the outer west of Sydney;
- Emphasising use of local manufacturing for transport project components; and
- Retaining the Transport Asset Holding Entity.

### Health

The Coalition's health initiatives include:

- Creating **25** urgent-care clinics to ease pressure on emergency departments and increase after-hours access to General Practitioners (GPs);
- Expanding the scope of pharmacists, with increased powers to administer vaccinations, birth control medication and other prescriptions;
- Funding an additional **10,148** doctors, nurses and healthcare workers;
- Building and upgrading hospitals, including in Rouse Hill and across western Sydney;
- Committing **\$80 million** to increasing access to IVF and **\$40 million** to menopause health hubs.



## Education

Teacher supply, school results and funding remain dominant education themes throughout the campaign. The NSW Coalition is campaigning on:

- Introducing a **\$15.9 billion** early years programme, with **\$5.8 billion** for universal pre-kindergarten for every four-year-old in NSW;
- Making permanent **15 000** currently temporary teachers and school staff;
- Continuing a **\$125 million** recruitment drive for teachers;
- Assigning an extra **\$253 million** for small group tutoring in public schools;
- Increasing teacher salaries up to **\$152,000** as part of the Rewarding Excellence in Teaching policy for up to **800 teachers**;
- Committing **\$8.5 billion** to school infrastructure over the next four years; and
- Reducing from **two** to **one year** post-graduate teaching degree courses.

## Affordability and Cost-of-Living

The Coalition continues to pursue measures to reduce cost of living pressures during the election campaign, by committing to:

- Assist motorists with new toll relief measures;
- Reduce energy bills by **\$250** for households who use a government website to compare their current energy deal with alternative offers before July 1; and
- Offer first home buyers a choice between paying stamp duty or a **lower annual property tax** on homes under \$1.5 million with a promise to extend the scheme.

## Energy and Environment/Climate

With concerns over the need for a strengthened natural environment in NSW including debates over water policy, the Coalition is campaigning on:

- its commitment to net zero by 2025, reducing NSW emissions by 50% by 2030 and 70% by 2035;
- expanding NSW National Parks; and
- going beyond the phase out of single use plastic to tackle more problem plastics with supermarkets and small businesses.

## Gambling Reform

The Coalition is committed to gambling reform, proposing:

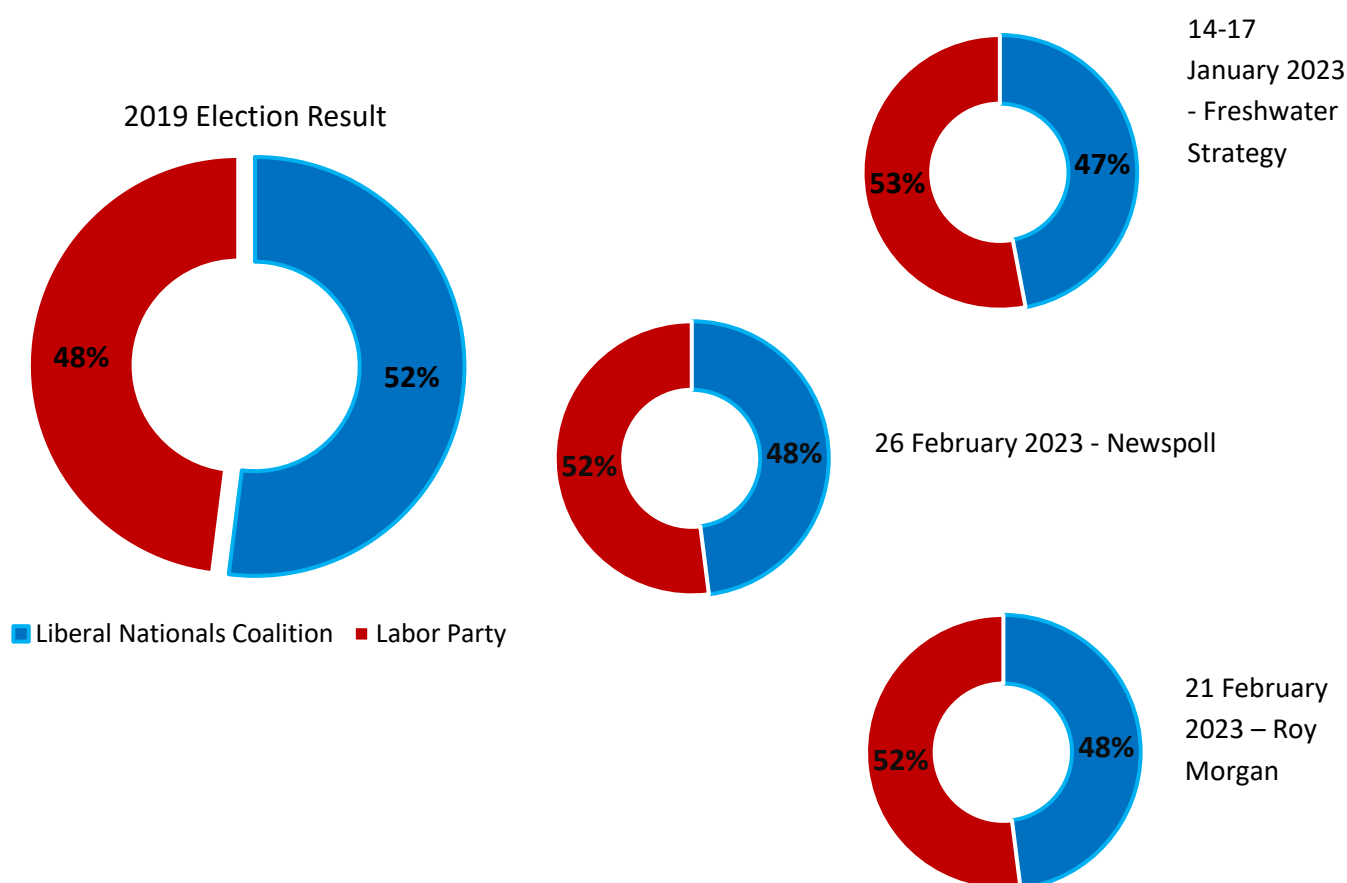
- A **\$340 million** plan to overhaul the NSW gambling industry;
- The **cashless** conversion of all NSW poker machines within five years;
- self-imposed **spending limits**;



- **no-interest loans** for venues to purchase new cashless machines;
- One-time grants of **\$50 000** to venues to explore new income streams, such as food and live music;
- A dedicated **transition fund** for regional venues; and
- A buyback scheme for **2000** machines.

## Current Legislative Assembly Two-Party Preference Polling

### A close contest



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The Coalition needs to hold its seats and make gains to be returned, especially in marginal Labor seats, including those notionally Labor following electoral redistributions.

The Labor Party needs to win (net) 9 seats to reach 47 and majority government. If Labor wins (net) 6 seats it could govern with the support of the Greens' (current) 3 seats in the Lower House.

Notwithstanding the greater challenge at a state level for independents (optional preferential voting, donation caps), independent gains would be in Liberal-held seats and diminish the Coalition's chances of returning to government.



## Close Contest Seats

Close contests are expected in very marginal seats and some safer seats with retiring long serving members; many state seats saw strong Labor votes in the May 2022 federal election.

Coalition seats facing very close contests include:

- East Hills (LIB 0.1%)
- Upper Hunter (NAT 0.5%)
- Penrith (LIB 0.6%)
- Goulburn (LIB 3.1%)
- Tweed (NAT 5.0%), and
- Parramatta (LIB 6.5%)

Labor's seats in contention are:

- Heathcote (ALP 1.7%) – now notionally Labor following a redistribution but contested by Liberal incumbent MP Lee Evans
- Kogarah (ALP 0.1%) – Opposition Leader Chris Minns' set should be held by Labor, and
- Leppington (ALP 1.5%) – a new seat – the Liberal candidate is Camden Mayor Therese Fedeli and the Labor candidate is Liverpool Councillor Nathan Hagarty

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And for Independents:

- Murray (Ind 2.8% v Nat) – Independent MP Helen Dalton formerly with the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party

A number of safer Liberal seats face independent challenges, including in Willoughby (LIB 3.3% vs IND), North Shore (LIB 11.1% vs IND), Manly (LIB 12.9% v GRN) Wakehurst (LIB 21.9%) and Pittwater (LIB 22.4% vs GRN). Similarly, Labor may face popular local independent challenges in Cabramatta (ALP 19.3%) and Fairfield (ALP 16.8%).

## Further Information

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