

## Letters, Coalition insipid campaign missed sitting targets

The Australian, 12:00AM July 5, 2016

The election result is one Malcolm Turnbull deserved but the nation didn't. In one of the most insipid Liberal campaigns since John Hewson's Fightback, a double dissolution election was called over union corruption but nary a word was said about it.

Labor had much to answer for, but no attacks were uttered over Labor's denial for a plebiscite vote on same-sex marriage, its support for the Safe Schools program disguised as an anti-bullying campaign, Labor's costly 50 per cent renewable policy, the likely return of asylum-seeker boats under Labor, and especially union corruption and Bill Shorten's support for enterprise agreements denying workers their penalty rates.

All we heard about was a nebulous plan that incorporated an attack on superannuation which had strong elements of retrospectivity and was a betrayal of the Liberals' conservative base. Malcolm Turnbull displayed feet of clay. His heart was not in fighting for the issues that mattered.

**Mort Schwartzbord**, Caulfield, Vic

### Leadership spill needed

Your editorial tells us that Malcolm Turnbull is wounded, perhaps fatally ("Disruption ahead as voters reject political contortions", 4/7). There's no "perhaps" about it. Tony Abbott was shafted on the basis that he would lead the Coalition to defeat. Despite the self-serving protestations of Liberal turncoats, we will never know if that's true. But he could hardly have done much worse than Turnbull, whose treachery could have been stomached if he had won a resounding victory with a strong mandate to get the one thing done that Abbott had hitherto failed to do — get the economy back under control.

If he can eventually form government, Turnbull will not have much of a mandate for anything other than not privatising Medicare.

Turnbull should call a leadership spill. Whichever way you look at it, he lost the election. For him to be negotiating with crossbenchers before he has sought his party's verdict shows arrogance beyond measure.

**Peter O'Brien**, Kiama, NSW

Let's not be too hard on Malcolm Turnbull. When he took over as PM, the polls were running 47-53 against him, and his party was heading towards becoming a right-wing Tea Party. He has all but won this election which was always going to be tight. And he did not make unfunded promises to do so. He can manage the economy into the future, he handles himself as a statesman on the international stage, and he can lead the great Liberal Party forward in its true traditions of liberalism and fairness.

**Ian Morison**, Forrest, ACT

### Protest about indecision

The vote isn't an endorsement of Bill Shorten's leadership or unfunded promises, but a protest against Malcolm Turnbull's role as chief waffler and his inability to make decisions.

Shorten was lucky he wasn't up against a political scrapper such as Tony Abbott who would have reminded us about Labor's years of waste and failed boatpeople policy.

This result is more about the political capital the Libs have squandered rather than the seats that Labor has won. If Turnbull forms government, he can consider himself the luckiest man in the room.

**Ray Sparvell**, Downer, ACT

Liberal National Party senator James McGrath has called on all members of the parliamentary party to get behind Malcolm Turnbull in the interests of party unity. This is the same Senator McGrath who, along with other Liberal plotters, conspired with Turnbull to bring down an elected first-term

PM who in the 2010 and 2013 elections had led the Coalition back from the political graveyard to which Turnbull had consigned it in 2009.

As chutzpah, his call takes a lot of beating. There is only one way what used to be called the Liberal Party's broad church can be restored. Turnbull, having now almost destroyed his party twice, must resign and leave the parliament. And the partyroom must invite his only credible successor, Tony Abbott, to resume its leadership.

**John Stone**, Lane Cove, NSW

The common thread on radio and in the street is that voters did not support the Coalition because of Tony Abbott's political assassination. As a sword hangs over Malcolm Turnbull and the government for the final count, a tough decision has to be made by his colleagues. Anyone with any political nous would know that changing riders in midstream would be fatal. So Turnbull must be allowed to resign with dignity, or he has to be pushed. There is no liking for the PM and those who put him there — the results prove that.

This is the time for strong leadership and we know who that leader is. Tony Abbott must be reinstated as PM to drag this government out of the mire and to heal the nation.

**Lesley Beckhouse**, Queanbeyan, NSW

On the one hand, we have Labor on the verge of possible office on a primary vote of a mere 36 per cent. On the other a Coalition, while clearly leading Labor on primary votes, is at risk of losing office. In either case, that office rests unsteadily on the whims of unpredictable independents with dire consequences to our prospects.

Whatever reason for this catastrophe, the prime ministerial revolving door, the suicidal stupidity of a party contemptuous of its conservative base and an inept Coalition campaign that failed to attack Labor on its weakest fronts — its umbilical cord to militant unions and dismal recent record in government — stand out.

**John Kidd**, Auchenflower, Qld

### **Shorten more energetic**

The message for Malcolm Turnbull is to get in touch with ordinary Australians. As a person from humble beginnings, Turnbull should have the capacity to do so.

He lost votes from many ordinary conservatives who drifted to minor parties. He lost votes to Labor's lies on Medicare and for not going hard countering this deception. He lost votes to a more energetic Bill Shorten who showed he could connect with ordinary people.

**Peter R. Tredenick**, Paddington, Qld

The Liberals' defeat will go down in history as an object lesson in how to fritter away political capital in record time. If the Libs squeak back into a minority government, the disrupters will have a firm grip on its private parts and the party will achieve nothing. If it fails to form government, the barbarians will again breach the city walls. Thanks very much.

The rationale for the double dissolution, the construction industry watchdog, will not pass, the trade union royal commission will have been another monumental waste of taxpayers' money, and those who the Coalition thought it could bring under control will thumb their noses and continue to destroy the economy.

I await the inevitable analysis and excuses but the Liberal Party should know that it only has itself to blame.

**David Bidstrup**, Plympton Park, SA

### **A fresh poll required**

Australia is compromised with this result and without the credible policies the Coalition had at the previous election, it would be better for the nation to go to the polls again rather than seek to

secure empty and vain political deals in an unmanageable Senate. To continue with such an ungovernable situation would be a dangerous and profligate waste of taxpayers' money and would effectively be a decision to cripple the country. Both the economy and the integrity of the Australian parliament must be restored and a new responsible result sought from the people.

**Mary Jardine Clarke**, Spearwood, WA

Malcolm Turnbull is doing what he did in his failed advocacy for a republic in the aftermath of the 1999 referendum. He is blaming others and saying they told lies. In 1999, his target was direct-election republicans. In 2016 he is blaming Labor.

He has only himself to blame. He should have won with a big margin due to the economic perils facing our nation and the business credentials of the Liberal Party. The pathway for redemption is to accept responsibility for the result and to deal with the Senate instead of attacking it.

**David Muir**, Indooroopilly, Qld

Surely there has to be an acceptance that the rot started under Tony Abbott. Malcolm Turnbull's support diminished with the realisation that Abbott and his conservative base was still there — the 2014 budget, removal of support for the car industry, Abbott's captain's picks (including Japanese submarines), and his hopeless performance as a minister (whether for health or for women).

We can't forget Abbott's stuff-ups. The main parties remain out of touch with the electorate, so we will have to become accustomed to multi-party parliaments.

**Claire Lockett**, Adelaide, SA