

## Matthew Guy preferred premier in poll as support for Daniel Andrews collapses

The Age, 3 September 2016, Josh Gordon, Richard Willingham

Voter support for Daniel Andrews has collapsed in the wake of the CFA debacle, with a majority now favouring Opposition Leader Matthew Guy to lead the state. In a finding that will send shockwaves through the state Labor government and intensify pressure on Mr Andrews over his handling of the CFA issue, Mr Guy is now leading Mr Andrews 51 to 49 per cent as preferred premier.

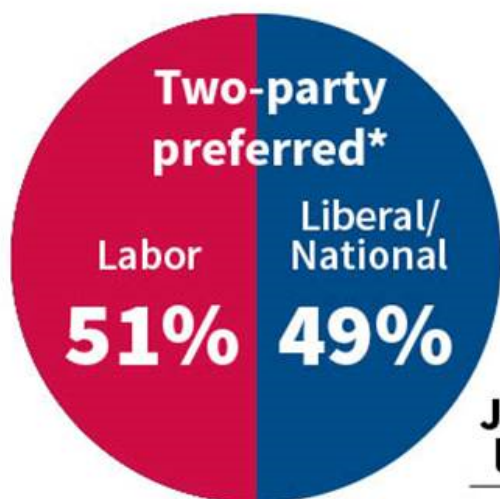
CFA saga far from over

Volunteer firefighters win a Supreme Court bid to stop a vote on the controversial workplace deal.

A ReachTEL poll commissioned by Fairfax Media has found Labor clinging to a narrow 51 to 49 per cent two-party-preferred lead, down from 52 to 48 per cent at the November 2014 state election. The poll of 1653 voters taken on Thursday night follows a shocking week for the Premier, with former emergency services minister Jane Garrett under pressure to resign from Parliament after being accused by her colleagues of leaking to destroy the government.

Garrett should resign if she's not contributing to the cause: Victoria's Treasurer. But the poll suggests Ms Garrett retains solid public support, having stood firm amid warnings Mr Andrews' union-backed CFA deal would dramatically undermine the role of volunteer firefighters. More than one-third of voters – 35.9 per cent – said Ms Garrett would make a better leader of the Labor Party than Mr Andrews, placing her in striking distance of the Premier, who was nominated by 42 per cent.

Ms Garrett was also well ahead of Treasurer Tim Pallas, nominated by 11.4 per cent, and Deputy Premier James Merlino, with 10.6 per cent support.



Source: ReachTEL

### Who would be the best leader of the Labor party?

Daniel Andrews	42.0%	Tim Pallas	11.4%
Jane Garrett	35.9%	James Merlino	10.6%

### Has Andrew's treatment of Jane Garrett made you more or less likely to vote for the Government?

More likely	11.1%	Less likely	47.8%	Vote unchanged	41.1%
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Matthew Guy is leading Daniel Andrews 51 to 49 per cent as preferred premier. Photo: Daniel Pockett

### How would you rate the Premier's handling of the CFA dispute?



### How would you rate the Premier's relationship with unions?



Source: ReachTEL

In a further blow to Mr Andrews, a resounding 58.8 per cent rated his handling of the CFA dispute as poor or very poor, with only 16.8 per cent rating it as good or very good. About half, 50.3 per cent, also said he was too close to unions.



Support for Daniel Andrews among Victorians has fallen off in the wake of the CFA debacle.

The Premier's treatment of the former minister has turned voters off, with nearly half of voters, 47.8 per cent, saying they were less likely to vote Labor because of it.

That follows claims by Ms Garrett that she was bullied by United Firefighters Union boss Peter Marshall, including allegations (denied by Mr Marshall) that he threatened that firefighters were coming to put axes through her head.

Mr Andrews, who has made much of his progressive agenda, has also been forced to publicly deny allegations from unnamed sources he made a disgusting comment about a Liberal MP battling bowel cancer. It has been a trying few months for the Premier after he changed tack to back the UFU's controversial industrial deal, prompting a string of resignations – including Ms Garrett as emergency services minister.

Many Labor MPs are alarmed at the rate at which the government has squandered its political capital, with a palpable sense of frustration that the dispute is crulling Labor's ability to talk about its strengths, including the economy and a busy infrastructure agenda.

The poll found Labor's primary vote languishing at 34.6 per cent (or 36.8 per cent after factoring in undecided voters leaning towards Labor), compared with 38.1 per cent at the last election. The Coalition is on 40.1 per cent and the Greens 10.7 per cent.

The results suggested Mr Guy has ground to make up with female voters, with 52 per cent of women backing Mr Andrews as preferred premier, compared with just 45.8 per cent of male voters.

The Premier also has strong support among younger voters, which is unsurprising given his strong social media presence.

In total, 50.6 per cent of voters said Mr Guy was best placed to lead the Coalition, compared with 15.6 per cent support for shadow treasurer Michael O'Brien, 15.1 per cent for shadow attorney-general John Pesutto and 18.8 per cent for planning spokesman David Davis.