

Andrew Bolt: Malcolm Turnbull trapped in No-man's land

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MALCOLM Turnbull is now in that nasty place that we conservatives live in too often — the Land of No.

The Land of No. How gloomy. Negative. Turnbull could never have imagined that he'd be living here. Not when he started with such hope — talking of this “exciting time” when we'd be so “agile” and “alive”, seizing “opportunities”.

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But hear him now. No to same-sex marriage, now that Labor this week blocked his people's vote.

No to more “action” on global warming.

No to boat people. No to taking in the asylum seekers on Nauru.

No to more spending.

No, no and no again.

Poor Turnbull. This is not really him, but he's trapped.

First, he is trapped by the deals he had to make to become Prime Minister.

The Nationals made him swear he would not change the government's policies on global warming and same-sex marriage. He's also trapped by the conservative MPs most likely to topple him. They are now warning — don't welch. It's a people's vote on same-sex marriage or nothing. Indeed, Nationals MP Andrew Broad threatened to walk from the government if Turnbull said yes to a politicians' vote instead.



Nationals MP Andrew Broad. Picture: Kym Smith

Turnbull is also trapped by polls that show the public is very hostile to more refugees coming in.

Lastly, he is trapped by his government running out of money. The Budget deficit last financial year was a frightening \$39 billion and ratings agency Standard & Poor's last week warned our total level of foreign debt was now "extreme". Turnbull simply does not have the money to say yes. To save his Budget — and government — he must instead say a thousand noes to pleas for more spending.

But Turnbull just isn't built for no. He is a bouncy man who loves the new and badly wants to be liked. He's a man for full cupboards, not empty pockets. This could tempt him into error. For instance, Turnbull would love to give in to Labor and say yes to a parliamentary vote that could give us same-sex marriage next week.

But that yes could cost him his job.

Mind you, Turnbull — the fake conservative — is in territory too many real conservatives are stuck in permanently. It is the weary duty of conservatives to say no to change, or at least "wait". Conservatives are by nature suspicious that the untested new will be worse than the trusty old. But people need more than no. The young especially like the buzz and the romance of change and a cause.



Malcolm Turnbull simply does not have the money to say yes, writes Andrew Bolt. Picture: Jake Nowakowski

That's the problem for conservatives — and, now, Turnbull. They have plenty they are against, but little they are for. They even talk in the language of no when they could talk yes. They say no to handouts when they should say yes to lower taxes and opportunity. They say no to multiculturalism when they should say yes to Australia.

That's not a problem with the Left. It is addicted to change. It lives on being for things — for humanity, for compassion, for fairness, for equality, for saving the planet. It hardly matters that what the Left actually delivers often fails or backfires.

So 1200 boat people actually drowned? So handouts actually broke the bank? Mere details. Feel the passion, don't count the price. Just say yes.

So how can conservatives — and Turnbull — compete? Well, here's a question: what is Turnbull actually for? He will say free markets, but that stirs no one. He will say lower taxes, but they're actually rising overall. He will say — half-heartedly — he's for giving the people a vote on same-sex marriage, yet he managed to lose that argument. Turnbull needs to be for stuff — stuff that won't cost his job.

So why not be for, say, jobs? For cheap electricity? For a chance for everyone to get ahead? For a country where none of us are judged by colour and all are treated equally? And how about being for free speech, an issue an Essential poll says is suddenly engaging many Australians?

No wonder, when the Racial Discrimination Act is now being used to sue three Queensland University of Technology students for \$250,000 for complaining that their university was racist to have Aboriginal-only computers.

So why can't Turnbull be for the free speech of these students and demand reform of that wicked law?

Yes, Turnbull will be criticised by the Left, but better to be attacked for what you are for rather than for what you are against.

But Turnbull today is in the Land of No. Time to find the Land of Yes.

ANDREW'S NEW BOOK, BOLT: WORTH FIGHTING FOR, IS AVAILABLE NOW. A REPRINT OF HIS SOLD-OUT BOOK OF COLUMNS, STILL NOT SORRY, ALSO AVAILABLE. VISIT [HERALDSUN.COM.AU/SHOP](https://www.HERALDSUN.COM.AU/SHOP)
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