

Newspoll: PM fails to turn corner with power battle



David Crowe, The Australian, 12:00AM June 19, 2017

The Coalition is struggling to climb out of a dangerous slump after trying to win back voters on school funding and energy prices, with the government trailing Labor by 47 to 53 per cent in two-party terms.

Malcolm Turnbull has kept his lead over Bill Shorten as preferred prime minister but has failed to revive the government's primary vote, a key measure that has flatlined at 36 per cent for more than 10 weeks.

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The latest Newspoll, conducted exclusively for The Australian, shows Labor has kept its commanding lead over the Coalition with the help of a small gain in its primary vote, from 36 to 37 per cent, since the last survey three weeks ago.

Comment: PM in a wilderness of mirrors

To view Newspoll on tablet or mobile, [click here](#)

Pauline Hanson's One Nation has also gained ground, with an increase in its primary vote from 9 to 11 per cent, its highest support in recent Newspolls and more than eight times its result in the federal election last July.

Support for the Greens fell in line with the rise in the Labor primary vote, producing the same two-party result for three surveys in a row and dashing hopes the government might gain a delayed "bounce" from the May 9 budget.

After the release of controversial plans for a clean energy target, a growing debate on school funding and a renewed focus on national security in the wake of terrorists attacks in London and Melbourne, the Coalition's primary vote is now at a level that would cost 13 seats and drive it from power at an election.

Deputy Prime Minister and Nationals leader Barnaby Joyce yesterday warned against division within the Coalition, in the "crazy boarding school" of federal parliament, after being asked whether former prime minister Tony Abbott was trying to make life difficult for Mr Turnbull. "I saw what happened in England — if you want to go down an alternate path (it) doesn't matter whether you are in England or the United States or anywhere else, people will punish you if they think you want to create instability," Mr Joyce told the ABC.

The backlash against British Prime Minister Theresa May in the June 8 election has energised Labor backbenchers, with Melbourne MP Andrew Giles declaring that "responding to inequality with hope" was the way to replicate the success of British Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn.

Mr Turnbull's standing with voters has been eroded in the latest survey, with 32 per cent saying they are satisfied with his performance, compared to 35 per cent three weeks ago. The Prime Minister's net satisfaction rating — the difference between those who are satisfied and those who are dissatisfied with his performance — declined as a result to negative 23 percentage points. While Mr Turnbull's net satisfaction has improved from the minus 30 result in February and minus 29 at the end of March, there is no sign of a trend building upon a big gain on this measure in the days after the federal budget.

Mr Shorten's net satisfaction rating has also deteriorated, from minus 20 points three weeks ago to minus 23 points today. The proportion of voters who are satisfied with the Opposition Leader's performance fell from 33 to 32 per cent, while those who were dissatisfied rose from 53 to 55 per cent.

Voters now rate both leaders the same on satisfaction, dissatisfaction and net satisfaction — with 13 per cent also "uncommitted" on both of them.

The Newspoll survey of 1,786 respondents, conducted from Thursday to Sunday, saw every key result hold steady or move within the margin of error of 2.3 percentage points.

The the latest survey is the 14th consecutive Newspoll in which the Coalition has trailed Labor, a tally that is now used against Mr Turnbull by his critics because he cited the loss of "30 Newspolls in a row" as a reason for challenging Tony Abbott in September 2015.

Mr Turnbull has retained his lead over Mr Shorten as preferred prime minister at a time of disagreement within the Coalition party room on energy policy and speculation over a shake-up of national security portfolios, to give Immigration Minister Peter Dutton more power. Voters trimmed their support for Mr Turnbull as better prime minister from 45 to 44 per cent, while they cut their support for Mr Shorten from 33 to 31 per cent. The proportion of voters who were "uncommitted" increased from 22 to 25 per cent. As a result, Mr

Turnbull slightly increased his lead over Mr Shorten on this measure to 13 percentage points, up from 12 points three weeks ago.