

Magic Newspoll number fast approaching Turnbull



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Graham Richardson, *The Australian*, 8:00PM September 26, 2017

It has now become normal to wake up every second Monday and see the latest Newspoll in this newspaper. It is now normal to expect a shocking result for Malcolm Turnbull and the Coalition.

This Monday was no exception as the losing run for the Prime Minister and his team continues unabated. As we now see the sequence of bad Newspolls reaching the twenties, it must be dawning on the Liberal party room that the magic number 30 is fast approaching.

That is the number of consecutive losing Newspolls which was used by the PM when he was toppling Tony Abbott from his perch. This week's two-party preferred figure of Labor on 54 per cent to the Coalition's 46 per cent was even worse than the 53-47 result we have come to accept as "normal". You would be entitled to think that the continuation of these awful numbers might induce a degree of panic out of the Coalition.

Well if like me, you thought that, you would be wrong. This time the Coalition lemmings seem almost enthusiastic about following their boss over the cliff. Perhaps they are clinging to the view put forward by Peter van Onselen in this

newspaper, that because Turnbull holds a personal lead over Shorten in the preferred prime minister stakes, that there is no need to panic.

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The problem with this theory is that Australians don't like either of them. Their net satisfaction ratings are minus 17 points and minus 20 points. The voters regard both of them as pains in the bum and that renders this yardstick pretty useless. When the crunch comes on election day they still have to vote for someone and it would appear Labor has more than a winning edge at the moment.

Certainly there appears to be little or no revolution among the conservatives' ranks at the moment. None of the putative candidates like Scott Morrison, Peter Dutton or Julie Bishop appears to be having any part of undermining the prime minister. Tony Abbott, Craig Kelly and a few others may be unhappy about the way energy policy is developing but no one is talking revolution. The Liberal Party is in some sort of pre traumatic syndrome. They are limping along to absolutely no avail and are heading for disaster. No one appears to have the will to take Turnbull on, so the waiting game continues. The lemmings have their bags packed for their trip over the cliff and are accepting of their fate.

While the silence about the quality of leadership continues, the obvious lack of a star alternative means that few complain. Just how long this discipline may last is anybody's guess. Eventually panic should set in unless there is a massive kangaroo-in-the-spotlight syndrome. I know that the desire to hold on to your own seat is a powerful incentive to raise a voice in anger or dissent. So far no one has been prepared to come out that harshly.

So for the time being an undeserving, unpopular leader is able to hold on to power by a thread. Will the sleeping dogs be down for much longer? I doubt it, so eventually we will know who did the dirty deed.