

Andrew Bolt: Liberal power is wasted without Liberal ideas

Andrew Bolt, Herald Sun

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ONE by one, Malcolm Turnbull has lost the journalists who backed him to replace Tony Abbott, the hated hammer of the Right.

LABOR DEMANDS MALCOLM TURNBULL REFER JOHN ALEXANDER TO HIGH COURT OVER CITIZENSHIP DOUBT
PETA CREDLIN: DUMPING MALCOLM TURNBULL WILL NOT FIX THE PROBLEM WITH OUR PARLIAMENT

The Prime Minister can now count on only two prominent members of the Canberra press pack to back him. One, of course, is Niki Savva of The Australian, who is really more an obsessive hater of Abbott than an admirer of Turnbull.

The other is Paul Kelly, also of The Australian, who famously argued in 2009 that Liberal MPs “would be signing their own political death warrant” if they did not back Turnbull, then Opposition leader, in supporting the Rudd government’s global warming scheme. How wrong Kelly was. The Liberals ditched Turnbull, picked Abbott and stormed to victory in 2013 on the battle cry: “Axe the carbon tax.”

See, fighting for something you believe in — especially against a menacing foe — is fun. It fires you up. It inspires supporters to donate their cash and sweat, even in tough times.

So, when Kelly, our leading political author, again appeals to Liberals to back his man, he again makes a profound misjudgment — not just of the politics but of people. “There would be no greater folly for the Liberals than triggering a leadership crisis on top of the dual citizenship crisis,” Kelly pleaded in The Australian yesterday. Dumping Turnbull would be “sheer bloody-mindedness”.

True, “Turnbull is not accepted by much of the conservative political legions in the country” but “the reality, however, is there is no viable alternative leader”. So Liberals must accept inevitable defeat. Worse, they must accept a leader many despise for failing to push Liberal causes.

Sorry, Paul. Politics doesn't work that way. People don't work that way.

I'm now reading a history of Scotland. And who is still the most admired hero of the Scots? It's William Wallace (Braveheart) who actually lost his war against British rule and was hung, drawn and quartered. A man who died for a noble cause.

Or look at Australian politics. Who did Labor members adore most: Gough Whitlam, who soared and crashed, or Bob Hawke, who governed sensibly for the middle? It's Whitlam, of course, who failed while striving mightily.

And what is our most sacred national day? It's the day we remember the Anzacs, who fought in a losing campaign but with inspiring mateship and guts. Our soldiers died, but their values live.



Replacing Turnbull with Tony Abbott or Immigration Minister Peter Dutton probably won't save the government from the defeat that Turnbull's bungling has made virtually inevitable. Picture: Gary Ramage

Yes, it is perfectly true — as I said here on Monday — that replacing Turnbull with Tony Abbott or Immigration Minister Peter Dutton probably won't save

the government from the defeat that Turnbull's bungling has made virtually inevitable. It may even hasten the end, if Turnbull — a deeply selfish man — then resigns and causes a by-election in a seat this dying government cannot afford to lose.

But too many Liberals feel they have lost already. What is Turnbull's government doing that makes them proud to be Liberals? Machine men and "fixers" say "only the impotent are pure". They say it's better to be in government and achieve 5 per cent of your agenda than out of power and get nothing.

But tell that to the Greens, who in 20 years of trying have never held more than one of the 150 seats in our House of Representatives, yet burn with passion still. In contrast, Liberal members despair as their Liberal government achieves much of Labor's agenda, instead.

Under Turnbull, the Liberals are achieving Labor-style record debt and spending.

Under Turnbull, blinded by his global-warming beliefs, they have delivered a Labor-style electricity plan that is actually another disguised carbon tax that, at best, will cut soaring power bills by only \$2 a week in about a decade.

Under Turnbull, the Liberals are delivering Labor-style high immigration, multiculturalism, and new laws limiting debate on gay marriage. They are bashing banks while funding a bloated ABC and an out-of-control Human Rights Commission.

Yes, this government still does some Liberal things. Its border controls remain strong and its welfare reforms chip at our handout culture.

Turnbull, to his credit, has also rejected racist plans for an Aboriginal-only advisory parliament.

And, of course, while the Liberals rule, Labor doesn't. That's a consolation, but it's not enough. "Not as bad as Labor" is not a slogan to get party volunteers on to the barricades. No, to lose in a grand cause is often better than to win in a dud one, because what counts most: to fight for power or fight for ideas?

Besides, you may lose today, but who can know tomorrow?