

Time is up for dud PM Malcolm Turnbull



Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull leaves his “excruciating” press conference on Monday. Picture: Gary Ramage

Graham Richardson, *The Australian*, 8:40PM November 8, 2017

The transactional cost of toppling an elected Prime Minister is often used as the reason why the boss must not be challenged. Paul Kelly writing in this newspaper on Wednesday reckoned that a challenge would be the last straw for the Coalition coming on top of the citizenship fiasco.

Peter van Onselen even thought Malcolm Turnbull could recover and win an election. Van Onselen cited some examples of recovery. John Howard in 1998 won an unexpected victory but the Norwegian ship, the Tampa, steamed into Australian waters and landed Howard a lucky win. The next example was Howard versus Latham in 2004. Latham’s embarrassing, hopeless and voter alienating campaign handed victory to Howard on a platter. Then Paul Keating recovered against John Hewson who got awfully flustered over the proposed GST on a cake when questioned by Mike Willesee. “Fightback” was a long political suicide note and Keating methodically and brutally tore it apart.

Looking at this weak-kneed mob masquerading as Liberal politicians makes me wonder why they are such dedicated, enthusiastic lemmings, anxious for a chance to follow over that cliff. They seem determined to jump without query or question. While they are prepared to mumble talk of revolution in back

rooms and back alleys, it would appear that none of them have the guts and courage to tell the PM what Australia has known for quite some time. His time is up.

Watching his press conference on Monday was truly excruciating and cringe-worthy. Our PM thinks that he can treat us all as mugs and that we won't work it out. As I always say, the mob will always work you out. On Friday an audit was "not the Australian way" and would be a "witch hunt". By Monday we were having the Turnbull version of a half-baked audit.

Self-reporting would be centre stage in this version that this gold medal ditherer presented to us. This despite the appalling duplicity of ex Senate President Stephen Parry who provided a stunning example of proof that integrity is not necessarily present in great quantities in some of our MPs. Sure enough more skeletons leapt out of the cupboard in which they had been hiding. Alex Hawke and John Alexander belatedly came out of their closets to reveal the very real doubts about their eligibility to sit in the Australian Parliament.

When it comes to banking, investing and big dollar deals, Malcolm Turnbull has few peers. When it comes to politics he is a total dud. His Monday admission that there may be a few more borderline cases was extraordinary. If he thought that, then why would he leave himself no back door when rejecting any suggestion of an audit. In politics nothing beats judgment and he has none. He is a stranger in his own land.

What faith can we have in any decision of the parliament next week when we know for sure some of those who will vote should not even be in the room. The other big question is how will the Governor-General be viewing all this. He must have faith in the government and he must have the view that parliament is made up only of those eligible to be there. Peter Cosgrove has much to contemplate.