

CLIMATE

## Voters switch off Turnbull's national energy guarantee plan



Malcolm Turnbull in Sydney yesterday. Picture: AAP

Simon Benson, The Australian, 12:00AM May 29, 2018

Malcolm Turnbull's national energy guarantee has failed to deliver any political gain, with the Coalition now trailing Labor on which party voters believe is better placed to deliver lower power prices and a secure energy supply.

A Newspann poll conducted for The Australian revealed that only 37 per cent believed the Coalition and Mr Turnbull would be better at maintaining energy supply and keeping power prices lower, compared with 39 per cent who backed Labor to deliver the reform. Almost a quarter of voters were undecided.

The findings come despite modelling showing that the opposition's renewable energy and climate change target policies would add up to \$300 a year to annual power bills.

The results, which will come as a blow to the Prime Minister and Energy Minister Josh Frydenberg, are almost certain to be seized on by a vocal pro-coal ginger group inside the Coalition party room when it meets today in Canberra. Its members suggest that, despite evidence that wholesale electricity prices have come down in the past year, voters are yet to be convinced that the government is better able to keep prices lower than they

otherwise would be. However, with 24 per cent of voters claiming to be uncommitted, the energy debate is still contestable for either of the major parties.

The poll follows a recent flare-up inside the Coalition party room over the government's response to AGL's refusal to keep open or sell the Liddell power plant in NSW and claims from the government's energy tsar, Kerry Schott, that not a single new coal-fired power plant would be built in Australia because they were uneconomical.

Mr Turnbull and Mr Frydenberg failed with attempts to strongarm AGL to sell the ageing Liddell power station to extend its operational life, leading to a spirited attack by Pauline Hanson, who accused the government of being anti-coal while rubbishing Mr Turnbull's Snowy 2.0 hydro plan as "bizarre".

The poll results were split down party lines, with 76 per cent of Coalition voters backing Mr Turnbull to deliver on energy prices and supply, and 73 per cent of Labor voters coming in behind Mr Shorten. One Nation voters were divided, with 30 per cent backing the Coalition but 23 per cent supporting Labor.

The high number of uncommitted One Nation voters, 47 per cent, suggests that the jury is still out on the government and its commitment to coal. There are those in the Coalition party room who believe the government should not have raised expectations in the first place that it could resolve what has been traditionally an area of state government responsibility.

Having believed a year ago that the Coalition could win an election on the cost-of-living issue, the poll suggests it could now become a negative for the government. The poll of 1591 voters across regional areas and the major cities was conducted between May 24-27. It is the first time voters have been asked directly which leader and which party they think would better manage the energy pricing and security crisis.

Labor and the Coalition have explicit policy positions, with the government scrapping subsidies for new renewable energy projects, abolishing the Clean Energy Target and setting up a technology-neutral market-based system under the NEG to drive new energy investment from the most efficient sources. Mr Shorten said in his budget reply speech Labor would commit to its 50 per cent renewables target by 2030, a 45 per cent emissions cut by 2030 and zero net pollution by 2050.

## COMPANY TAX REFORM

Political support

	Total	Coalition	Labor	Greens	One Nation
<b>AS SOON AS POSSIBLE</b>	36	47	28	34	32
<b>IN STAGES OVER THE NEXT 10 YEARS</b>	27	39	20	16	28
<b>NOT AT ALL</b>	29	10	45	39	32
<b>UNCOMMITTED</b>	8	4	7	11	8

**Question:** The government has announced a tax plan that will reduce the company tax rate for all Australian businesses from 30% to 25%. These changes will be implemented in stages over the next 10 years. In your opinion, should the proposed changes to the company tax rates come into effect as soon as possible, in stages over the next 10 years or not at all?

## BETTER PARTY ON ENERGY

Political support

	Total	Coalition	Labor	Greens	One Nation
<b>MALCOLM TURNBULL AND THE COALITION</b>	37	76	9	15	30
<b>BILL SHORTEN AND THE LABOR PARTY</b>	39	10	73	55	23
<b>UNCOMMITTED</b>	24	14	18	30	47

**Question:** In your opinion, who would be best at maintaining Australia's energy supply and keeping power prices lower?

*These surveys were conducted in all states of Australia and in both city and country areas. The data has been weighted to reflect the population distribution. The latest survey is based on 1591 interviews among voters. The maximum sampling error is plus or minus 2.5 percentage points. Copyright at all times remains with Newspoll.*