

Brace for the backlash: Labor's warning to ScoMo



The backlash seen in Victoria could deliver Federal Labor four seats — and depose PM Scott Morrison next year, a Labor frontbencher says. Picture: Cameron Spencer/Getty

Richard Ferguson, Reporter,
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Last night's state election backlash to the Victorian Liberals in Melbourne's eastern suburbs could deliver Federal Labor four seats and government next year, a Labor frontbencher says.

Daniel Andrews' landslide win has been fuelled by winning some long-held Liberal seats in the leafy eastern suburbs and some, like the heartland seat of Hawthorn, are still in doubt.

But senior Victorian Liberals such as Josh Frydenberg said last night that the campaign was about state issues, and that they can still hold on in Australia's second biggest state.

As the Liberal party reels from Victoria's electoral disaster, the NSW Premier says she won't be relying on PM to help her win.

Federal opposition defence spokesman Richard Marles said this morning that Victorian federal shifts have traditionally not swung between parties like NSW

and Queensland, but last night's win put several seats in Melbourne's east in Labor's sights. "You look at the areas where we say ten per cent swings last night, they correspond into federal seats. Not just into one or two, but we're looking at Deakin, La Trobe, Chisholm, Aston, Casey, all these seats in the eastern suburbs," he told Sky News.

"For the first time, in a long time ... going back decades, there is the prospect of a lot of seats being in play in Victoria which we haven't seen."

The Liberals are already faced with holding assistant minister Sarah Henderson's seat of Corangamite, which is on a margin of 0.03 per cent, and Chris Crewther's seat of Dunkley which is notionally Labor after a federal seat redistribution.

Some of the seats highlighted by Mr Marles this morning include House of Representatives Speaker Tony Smith's seat of Casey on a 4.5 per cent margin, and former assistant treasurer Michael Sukkar's seat on Deakin on a margin of 6.3 per cent.

Last night, Treasurer Josh Frydenberg said the turmoil over the Liberal Party leadership had not helped the Liberals' campaign in Victoria but said the same issues would not dominate next year's federal poll. "This was a state election fought on state issues. The federal government and federal Liberal Party were not involved in the state campaign," he told Sky News. "The noise from Canberra didn't help but it didn't determine the result."

Richard Ferguson