

Morrison snooze-fest won't defeat Shorten

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Prime Minister, this will not do. Not if you really want to pull off the greatest political miracle and win this election you've just called.

Where on earth is your mongrel? Your fight? Your big wake-up-Australia cry?

You're starting behind, remember. Three seats short of a majority already, and with every poll saying you're headed for a hiding.

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In fact, Scott Morrison has just five weeks to persuade Australians not to do what polls show they've been itching to do for two and half years – to vote out this brawling, divided Coalition Government that's given us three different Prime Ministers but next to no wage growth.

So what does Morrison do in his first and most important speech of the election campaign?

What a snooze-fest.

First, Morrison runs on a made-up Liberal record, for heaven's sake – a record no voter could recognise. His Government, Morrison claimed in his appallingly flat speech this morning, has "fixed the budget" (Er, no, it hasn't; it is still in deficit this year) and it is "lowering taxes" (Er, no again; personal taxes won't be cut until next year).

And then Morrison reminded voters of the bleeding obvious, that "we have a choice" at the election.

No kidding. Just like at every election. But what choice exactly?

And here's the real failure of Morrison's big election pitch, which – if he doesn't change it fast – will turn a Liberal defeat into a landslide.

The choice, said Morrison, was between “a Government that is delivering a strong economy and will continue to do so, or Bill Shorten’s Labor Party, whose policies would weaken our economy”.

Well, first, this doesn’t feel at all like a strong economy to voters, a point exploited devastatingly by Shorten just hours later, when he kicked off his own campaign in the Melbourne suburban home of a couple who complained they were struggling to get ahead.

Yes, clucked Shorten sympathetically: “Everything is going up except people’s wages.”

Too right, many voters will say, and with some justification. Real wage growth for the past five years has been almost zero – around just 0.3 per cent a year, or less if you are in the private sector.

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OK, but what about the other half of Morrison’s comparison – that Labor would “weaken our economy”?

Well, indeed it would. Think just of the Labor policies that have been unravelling the past two weeks: its planned \$200 billion tax grab over 10 years to an economy that’s already slowing dangerously; the apparent \$8 billion costing hole in Labor’s changes to negative gearing; its half-baked plan to make us buy an extra 575,000 electric cars every year; and its disastrous plan to slash global warming emissions by 45 per cent by 2030, making our electricity even more expensive and unreliable.

So how much of that did Morrison mention in his speech and question-and-answer afterwards?
Zero.

Correction: there was a passing vague reference to Labor promising “higher taxes that will weigh down our economy”, without explaining which and why. Full stop.
Seriously? That’s it?

The Liberals seem to have this fantasy that they're a good government that just needs voters to wake up to precisely how good they are. So be prime ministerial. Stay calm and measured.

Guys, wakey, wakey. Right now you're perceived instead as an underperforming rabble - despised even by last year's Liberal Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull.

You form a minority in both the House of Representatives and the Senate. You are behind in every poll.

You are the opposition, so fight like one. See, only one thing can possibly save the Government.

It won't be to persuade voters how good they were. No one believes that. It can only be to persuade them that Labor will be much, much worse. Think of its tax grabs. Its mad global warming schemes. Its love of bullying. Its dodgy figures. Its massive spending.

Morrison needs to attack Labor every single day, just like Tony Abbott did in winning the 2013 election, and just as Paul Keating did to the Liberals in 1993, coming from way behind by attacking the grand plans of Liberal leader John Hewson, the "feral abacus" and "mad professor" pushing a GST.

Forget acting like a Prime Minister, Mr Morrison. You're instead a scrapper, and Labor's worst enemy – or should be.

You must be the one person left to remind us of what's coming while it's not too late.