

**Report on the ASSA Workshop on the 2010 Federal Election. The Edited Workshop papers are to be published by ANU E-Press in a volume entitled *Julia 2010: the Caretaker Election*.**

**Convenor and Editor:** Professor Marian Simms, Deakin University; **Co-Editor,** Professor John Wanna, the Australian National University.

**Advisory Group:** Dr James Jupp FASSA (ANU), Professor John Wanna FASSA (ANU), Professor Carol Johnson FASSA (University of Adelaide), Professor Dean Jaensch (Flinders University)

**Overview:** - This project is the latest in a series of post-election workshops and books that the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia has supported. During the discussions over the 1998 Election Workshop the Academy agreed to sponsor future election workshops, with the proviso that the convenors should provide a general outline and budget. The previous workshops have all resulted in publications: *The Politics of Retribution: the 1996 Federal Election* (Allen & Unwin, 1997); *Howard's Agenda: the 1998 Australian Election* (University of Queensland Press, 2000); *2001: The Centenary Election* (University of Queensland Press 2002); *Mortgage Nation: the 2004 Australian Election* (Australian Public Intellectuals Network, 2005); and a two-part Special Issue of *Australian Cultural History* (2009 and 2010), *Kevin07: The 2007 Australian Election*. John Warhurst (ANU) was involved as co-convenor and co-edited from 1996-2005. The publications have been well reviewed by academics and well received by the general community. Writers such as Paul Kelly utilize the books as valuable sources for their interpretative histories of Australia. Copies of such Reviews and commentaries are available on request.

**Rationale:**-The purpose of these projects is to bring together a team of around 22 to 25 comprising academics and practitioners to present and debate their points of view about the national election. The unique value of the ANU location is that it provides useful synergies between town and gown, and facilitates practitioners providing important data, for example, their own quantitative and qualitative survey research, and also receiving feedback from academics about the relevance of party research for academic study.

Equally academics benefit from learning about the internal decision-making processes of election campaigning, and from accessing some of the internal party research findings, which provide useful insights that is often beyond the scope of more cash-strapped academic research. Normally workshops have been held 6-8 weeks after the national election when memories are still fresh and some data are available from empirical surveys.

**The Team:** - The Workshop and the book includes academics who are experts on the politics of their States, others who are leading experts on key interest groups and social movements, especially unions, business, migrants and women, writers on political leadership, political culture, campaigning, media – print, electronic and ‘new’, and opinion polls, and the Australian Election Study group. The team includes the leading specialists, for example, Clive Bean (QUT), Murray Goot (Macquarie), John Wanna (ANU), Malcolm Mackerras (ADFA), Marian Sawer (ANU), James Jupp (ANU), and Dean Jaensch (Flinders) as well as emerging scholars, such as Peter Chen (Sydney). Party directors or their nominees from all parties with parliamentary representation were invited.

**Overview:-**

Labor’s unique challenge after the record-breaking win in December 2007 was to manage its policy commitments whilst facing multiple crises including: the Global Financial Crisis (GFC); a resurgent Opposition under Tony Abbott; and dramatically declining poll ratings for Kevin07. The 2010 Election showed that the historic decision to replace Kevin Rudd with his Deputy Leader Julia Gillard was not the ‘circuit breaker’ for Labor that was predicted by the media. The ‘tied’ election result, the subsequent process of negotiating for a new government and the resultant minority government raised crucial questions about the nature of the Australian political system and the capacity of the Australian party system to reflect underlying changes in the electorate.

The overarching issue is whether leadership was a pivotal issue in 2010; as it was in 2007 when the election campaign itself, ‘... became a testing ground for the Liberal leadership team of John Howard and Peter Costello and a proving ground for the new opposition leadership team of Kevin Rudd and Julia Gillard.’ (Marian Simms in *Australian Cultural History* December 2009).

Workshop contributors approached this issue in a range of different and complementary ways. Sources included interviews and observations, published material, including televised interviews, transcripts of speeches and published opinion polls, internal party research, the Australian Election Survey and aggregate data, including previous results and census data.

**The presentations:-**

The two-day workshop to discuss the 2010 Federal Election was held at University House on 9 and 10 October 2010. The workshop commenced at 9AM on Saturday 19 January, with an informal welcome by Dr James Jupp (ANU), an ASSA member and former Director, and an overview by Professor Marian Simms, the Convenor.

The two morning sessions were on 'Leaders and the Campaign' and 'The Media and the Polls'. Papers were presented on 'The Leaders', 'Campaign Diary' and 'The Ideological Contest' by author and former Minister Rodney Cavalier, Marian Simms (Deakin) and Carol Johnson (Adelaide) in the first session. Papers on 'Opinion Polls', 'Political Cartoons' and 'The Electronic Campaign' were presented by Murray Goot (Macquarie), Haydon Manning (Flinders) and Peter Chen (Sydney). A paper on 'Leaders' Interviews and Speeches (Geoffrey Craig – University of Canberra) was tabled.

Much of the lively discussion at those sessions related to the role of the Labor Party's new leadership team, Julia Gillard and Wayne Swan, reasons for the failure of the Rudd team to retain its previous popularity, and the remarkable leadership transition of 24 June, which saw Rudd deposed by Caucus as Leader and Prime Minister.

The first afternoon session featured presentations by the ALP's Elias Hallaj and by the Australian Greens Campaign Director Ebony Green, and high-profile candidate (and former Australian Democrats Senator) Andrew Bartlett. Apologies were received from the Liberal Party Director and the ALP's Secretary Karl Bitar. A paper was received from the Liberals for inclusion in the edited volume.

The next session was the first of two panels presenting research on the campaigns, issues and results in the States and Territories. Papers were presented on Victoria (Nick Economou - Monash), South Australia & the Northern Territory (Dean Jaensch). The importance of Labor's campaign in NSW was emphasized as well as the extreme variability of the swings across Australia. Papers on Queensland (Ian Ward - UQ), New

South Wales (Elaine Thompson) and Western Australia (Narelle Miragliotta – Monash- and Campbell Sharman - UWA) were tabled.

Sunday morning commenced with the second ‘State and Territory’ panel, with presentations on Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory, and Rural and Regional Australia by Tony McCall (UTAS), Malcolm Mackerras (ADFA) and Jennifer Curtin (Auckland)/Dennis Woodward (Monash), respectively.

The second Sunday session was a very lively panel on ‘Social Constituencies’ with presentations by Marian Sawyer (ANU) on Women, James Jupp (ANU) on Immigration and Ethnicity, John Wanna (ANU) on Business and Unions, and John Warhurst(ANU) on Religion.

The final session on Overview and Results included discussion of the state of Malcolm Mackerras’ pendulum and the variability in the swing across the country. The Workshop then concluded with general discussion regarding the next stage of the project. The discussion throughout was lively and interesting, and drew upon over 20 papers that had been circulated in advance of the workshop. It was decided to invite Professor Brian Costar (Swinburne) to contribute a paper on the post-election period and the construction of the minority government for consideration in the proposed edited volume.

The Australian political science community was saddened to hear of the sudden death of Dr Dennis Woodward in May 2011. Dennis was a long-term contributor to this and many other projects. To commemorate his work the edited volume will be dedicated to Dennis.

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