

# Poll Position

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**Peter Lewis** [00:00:03] Good evening everyone and welcome to who I very special Poll Position as special after dark election post-mortem. I'm Peter Lewis, director of Essential Media. I've been given the very daunting task of driving this webinar because Ebony is taking a well-earned break. I've also got to tell you, Katherine Murphy is still in a press conference where the shadow cabinet sorry, not the shadow cabinet. What am I talking about? The cabinet is being announced as we speak. She's about 10 minutes away. But I am so glad that I'm not driving this solo. And I've got the Fantastic Richard Denniss from the Australia Institute. Hi, Richard. Before I take the car on the road, I'm on Gadigal country and I'd like to begin by acknowledging traditional owners of the land respects to elders past, present and emerging. Recognising sovereignty was never ceded and this will always be Aboriginal land. Now you guys know the drill here and we've got an amazing turnout for tonight, I think, with top 2000 people on the RSVP list. So if you are new to this welcome, you can ask questions in for our panellists using the Q&A box whenever you like. You can also upvote questions you want me to put to Richard and Katherine as the event unfolds. As Ebony always says, keep things nice, will boot you out. And finally, this is a live event. It's being recorded. The video will be available today at the Australia Institute, Duck TV, and the audio will be up as a podcast on the Guardian's Australian politics tomorrow morning. So normally Ebony would welcome Mae and Katherine at this point, but we're already here, or one of us is here anyway. So look, I don't look. Let's start by maybe doing a bit of a report card on how the polling went. I'd rather do this with Catherine. Not here, to be honest with you. But Richard, let's another time three years ago, there was, I guess, in my industry, appalling, a degree of self-flagellation going on because we were on the extremes of margin of error. So I thought it was useful to maybe before we get too deeply into this, I open the kimono and tell you how we went this time with the essential report up late. So I'm going to do that very inelegant sharing of the screen and just show you what we came up with. Here we go. Here's our poll position put together by the fantastic Rob Labor. Now, we were a little bit thin on the primary vote. If you look at this, we're down on both major parties where I do take some comfort, the gap's about the same. So if I'm being harsh, we have we have said and this is when we've taken out our don't knows which to the light breakers. So I can always argue all the light breakers broke one way, but let's just pretend we're doing it the old way. We're a little bit fat on the major parties. A little bit skinny on the grains. Sorry, grains, a little bit skinny on the independents. We don't quite have an explanation of all that. But what we will do over the next month is really interrogate those findings and make sure that we have our weightings right. There are some theories floating around that, you know, for

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instance, there are strategic Labour voters that push the Labour primary vote down because I lived in tail states and I want to say the tail selected and all those teal supporters. Good on you. I saw it coming. Most people didn't. But it does say to me that this poll is probably still a little bit of a representative of the major parties. And we've got to look at what's going on there and whether it's the nature of the sample, whether it's the nature of the weighting. But the one I do want to show everyone is this, because I reckon this time back in terms of the TPP, where Essential said, you know, 5149 and it came out 5149. Richard. Are you going to cover us with glory? I know you had a good day with the with the the betting agencies, but can I get a cut of that? Are you are you attributing any of this to my my my guidance?

**Richard Denniss** [00:04:20] Yeah. No, I think I think the polls weren't too bad at all. And yet I don't bet on much, but I do bet on elections. And I. When I bet on elections, I bet based on a combination of polls and history. And I think the polls were quite accurate this time. The polls accurately predicted the swing to the tails. Most people kind of wanted to tell themselves the polls were wrong when it came to those independents. Most people wanted to tell themselves that, oh, maybe one or two of them would win, but they could. No way the polls said they could all win, which didn't make it inevitable. But what the polls said happened then majority majority Labor government was predicted by the polls and that's what's coming in. So yeah I don't see that we can ever. A poll is not an election and if they were we could save ourselves a lot of time and a lot of money for a year. But yeah, look, the polls were the polls were quite wrong four years ago. But in some sense I think that there was so much sleep polling this time. And again, everyone's a bit nervous about, say, polling, but three years ago, perhaps there wasn't enough. There was just that national poll. And let's never forget that at the last election, the 2019 election, there were big swings to Labour in those states, Liberal seats there really a lot of votes moved, but no seats moved and that actually set up what just happened with the tails, the independents winning all those seats. It was in those same seats where a lot of Liberal voters shifted last time, which did affect the polls but didn't affect the didn't affect the seats. That changed hands.

**Peter Lewis** [00:06:04] Yeah. Oh, look, I think we did a good job of taking the polls out of the competition. And by that, I mean polling should always be part of the the noise behind the election, not the scoreboard. And I think that I think partly once bitten, twice shy, like everyone was a bit suspicious of the polls. But we were very conscious, for instance, to keep the nose in there and to say, we're not telling you what's going to happen. We're just trying to give you a bit of an indication of of what's happening now. I think the other thing is that it's and maybe this is a broader discussion when Murph gets here, but it feels to me that this may be well, if 2019 might have been the last real two party election where two party preferred is even relevant because so many seats. And if you watch in the. All seats moving in three corner contest. The two party preferred is shifting. Green, blue, red, blue, red, green, particularly in that seat of MacNamara. So if we are moving towards more of a multi-party system where there are more voices and more players, then again we're going to have to adapt the way that we take the temperature of the political system.

**Richard Denniss** [00:07:18] Absolutely. And I think I that will be good. That'll be better for democracy. But be yeah. In terms of the two party preferred and in terms of just looking at elections as a horse race between two major parties, look, you know, as someone that

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works for the Democrats 20 years ago and works for the Greens 15 years ago, it's always been hard for independents and minor parties to the right dimension in a lot of national analysis. I do hope those days are behind us. But also, I mean, think about the dynamics in the lead up to the next election. You know, the Liberals will spend a year ripping into themselves as loudly as they'll try and rip into labour. But let's just kind of put them aside for a while because we can. But in two years time when we start to think about what's going to happen in the election. Real issues like so will the Liberal Party pursue trying to win back those once heartland seats or not? Won't just have a horse race connotations. Strategic decisions like whether to abandon that former heartland or whether to try and win it back. It's going to have a huge impact on the nature and the shape of the policy debates that we have, because the the issues the Liberals will have to focus on to win back the the broken heartland are going to be quite different from, you know, if you if you if the Liberals are still taking advice from Tony Abbott and they're going to chase out of suburban seats of Labour. So if if we're going to have to have a more nuanced picture of the whole electoral map and internal issues, polling and state by state polling, I think is going to have play an even more important role.

**Peter Lewis** [00:09:06] You know, the other one that I don't know if people here picked up was that the guys at YouGov working with Newspoll ran a very different model, the AMP, which was effectively a big data exercise today. They did a survey of 11,000 Australians and then broke that into Sensis. Quite granular census segments, then matched them against electorates and then did a big, brave prediction that the election would end up with 80 seats later. They were a little bit flat on that as well. But it was interesting, particularly in the Labour pick ups, they were pretty right. They missed a number of the top pick ups. But I thought it's great when you get new methodologies coming into the system and that was really just using data rather than polling, to be honest with you. I still I'm still not sure a lot of those single say it's not a condom drop that quite a few that were a bit skittish as well. The other thing that the major parties do is they just do a what they call the track where they identify 16 to 20 marginal seats and they're basically fine polling guys every night to see if the seats that really matter are going their way. And that was really what gave Labour's campaign confidence that despite all the noise, it was going to be a good night on election night.

**Richard Denniss** [00:10:31] Yeah, absolutely. And I think that I've always been surprised that no one tries to emulate those party track polls, because if nothing else, it's pretty obvious what seats.

**Peter Lewis** [00:10:43] Very expensive they're doing. They're doing a fine pile of 300 every night. And that's big because over time.

**Richard Denniss** [00:10:52] Or not, I mean, they do it every night, but I mean, actually put together the equivalent of what's happening in those 20 seats. But I mean, let's you know how when was the last time anyone saw a poll that suggested the coalition were going away like, you know, it really.

**Peter Lewis** [00:11:08] 2016?

**Richard Denniss** [00:11:11] Well, pretty much so. So, yeah. So again, you know, I don't think polls tell us exactly what's going to happen, but poll after poll said that Morrison was on the nose, it clearly was. The Liberals internal polling was telling them. And poll after poll said that Labour were well in front. It's interesting whether or not Labour was expecting such a big swing to them in Western Australia or not. I mean, on the night, you know, I thought the ABC coverage was a bit confusing like most people. But I kept thinking, well, if this is what's happening nationally, whatever's happening in Western Australia is going to be worse for the Government. And it was, but still, you know, for people like Ben Morton to lose their seat, you know, there was a really basketball fatigue and I wonder whether that was picked up.

**Peter Lewis** [00:12:07] Know not even the white guys saw that coming that you know and I on election night for those who've a long memory have has often been the boulevard of broken dreams where you need to pick up four or five seats for a miracle victory. This time it just came swoosh. And that and that kind of ended any argument, you know? And look, there are all sorts of tykes all over the place. But, you know, fantastic night for the Tales, great election for the Greens, great election for Labour if you don't like being in opposition and just a total repudiation of the Morrison model. I've got a piece up in The Guardian today where I kind of one of the points I try to make not to watch is the metaphors about marriage in there as well. But one of the points I did want to make was that in reality this is the end of the Howard era. Like Labour's squandered those six years in power and Morrison was basically governing on the Howard era model of neoliberalism plus national security, fear, bus plus division by design. And to get that model broken now. When did he come in? 96. So it's kind of been part of our political lexicon for the best part of 25 years. That's the magic part for me. And it's really in front of not just Labour, but I think the progressive movement to build a long term progressive government that doesn't. It's not about everyone sitting together, getting together and singing Kumbaya. It's about recognising there's going to be a friction in a contest of ideas, but finding a way maybe not to weaponize it, imbed the tails into the political landscape because it shifts the needle. Find a way of not sharing power with the Greens, but managing power with the Greens in the Senate and sticking to what is a not insubstantial mandate. So I don't know where you go with all that, Richard. I guess we're getting way ahead of ourselves. And I know everyone's waiting for Catherine to get here. She just texted me saying the conference is almost over. But I guess I guess the other point that we can throw out here at the moment waiting for her is what sort of headwinds are we going to face economically, Richard? And can Labour actually do what they set out to do? Here she is.

**Peter Lewis** [00:14:21] God, if you've ever heard of a filibuster, we are it. But hi, Katharine. We're just getting Richard to just give us a bit of a quick on where the economy is from, where he sees it, and what headwinds are rolling for labour. And then we are going to get the hot news off the press from you. By the way, i am drinking kante tonight and anyone that isn't should be joining me. Go Richard.

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**Richard Denniss** [00:14:43] Look, I think the headwinds that the Jim Chalmers and the Labour government will have to deal with, you know, they started to blow just before the election. But I really think it's fascinating because just as the economic debate became the centrepiece of the election campaign, what to do about wages, what to do about the cost of living, what to do about inflation, what to do about the debt. Apparently this is supposed to be strong ground for the liberals, you know, economic management. I've been as an economist that always kind of does my head in better economic management, I'm told, is in fact, I remember Tony Abbott saying it was in the DNA of Liberal MP. Well when, when economic management really came to the fore at the end of the campaign, I actually think that that's when Labour really started to not just differentiate itself but pull ahead. So the headwinds that they're going to have to deal with are, well, the hardest one that no one really wants to admit is that it's enormous amounts of public spending for the last two years that have kept the economy strong. Like everything we've been told about private sector, good government, bad will, the opposite is true. The national accounts make clear that it's government spending that's kept the economy rolling. If the government if the Labour government pulls that spending back to how the economy will slow down, look at it. There's no there's no two ways about that. But if they don't pull it in, they're going to get criticised the reckless spending, unlike the Liberals. Same with inflation. We're seeing real wages fall. Real wages are falling in Australia at the moment because inflation is running ahead of wage growth. Well, when real wages for consumers spend less money, but there's just no two ways about it. If you're spending more in your electricity bill, you will spend less on something else. So the scary kind of scenario is the government pulling back public spending at the same time that real wage increases mean the private sector is spending less money. That's that's a pretty scary environment. But here we are with low unemployment and high inflation. So we're not in the seventies experiencing stagflation. We're in 2022, experiencing something we've never seen before. And it's going to take some some subtle decision making and and ultimately some bold decisions.

**Peter Lewis** [00:17:16] Hi, Murph. What's the mood like down there? Tell us what's going on. So welcome. I know that you you approached Election Day with trepidation, but here we are on the other side. Yes. What's going on? How's the vibe?

**Katharine Murphy** [00:17:30] Well, it's it's well, look, as someone who's covered every transition or change of government since 1996, I can say without a shadow of a doubt that this one is moving at a faster clip than anyone I've previously documented, even though, funnily enough, we're still dragging through the final count of the election more than a week after people cast their votes or a lot of people cast their votes, you know, it's really extraordinary what's happened in the last week. Obviously, Anthony Albanese's become the prime minister, was sworn in with an interim executive, went to Tokyo 5 minutes later, came back, you know, people rolled into Canberra over the last 48 hours. Obviously there's a new Opposition leadership in Peter Dutton and Susan Ley. I was a bit late this evening and apologies to all because Anthony Albanese after caucus met today is now currently unveiling his. A Cabinet ministry that's just basically happened in the last 15 minutes or so. And those folks will be sworn in at 930 tomorrow and then by the end of this week. Anthony Albanese, I'll be on the plane again to Jakarta and he's told us today that Parliament will sit again in the last week of July. So it's moving all over the place in terms of the ministry. I think it's largely as we expected. It was mooted for some time that Richard Marles, who's the Deputy Labour

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leader, would end up with Defence. And that's that's the case. Most people have kind of stayed more or less where they've been in terms of shadow portfolios, but there are some surprises. Tanya Plibersek is the new Environment Minister. I confess I didn't see that one coming. Also, Claire O'Neill, who is a Victorian right winger, has been given the home affairs portfolio, which is obviously a big challenge and a big responsibility and a big step up for her. But she's an incredibly bright.

**Peter Lewis** [00:19:36] Who got aged care?

**Katharine Murphy** [00:19:38] Aged care. I think Mark Butler has predominant responsibility as health minister, but I do think he's I'm pretty sure there's someone underneath him. I think it's Anika Wells. But like I said, I literally had 2 seconds to play this in the room, so I may have got that wrong.

**Peter Lewis** [00:19:56] Yeah, we want. We want you, I, I think. But but but in terms of the sense of the government, I know that Albo has taken, tried to take the heat out even of the partisan attacks, that we're not going to call Peter Dutton any names under his watch. Does it feel different there or does it just, you know, is it just like a pain?

**Katharine Murphy** [00:20:22] No, no, no, no, no. It does. It does. It's extraordinary. How it's I don't know. Is it Keating who said change the government, change the country. And certainly we've got the beginning of a new tempo and tone in Canberra. It's, it's very different obviously to the previous government early days of course, but, but it is very different. I think even though Anthony Albanese didn't have the greatest election campaign, he wasn't always confident and he didn't always kind of master the daily hustings vaudeville. I think he's looking incredibly confident since since they've all been back. And in this theatre of Parliament and Government, this is very, very familiar territory to Anthony Albanese. This is not something that he's never experienced before. He's looking very confident. He's asserting his confidence. He's he he is, as you say, paid sort of, you know, trying to presage a new tone in the way politics is conducted. Is is he's sort of gesturing at the new parliament, which has a record number of crossbenchers in the lower house in terms of, you know, we've got to we've got to think about doing politics differently, you know, this kind of rhetoric. I think it'll be very interesting to see whether or not sorry, I just haven't turned my emails off. If you're a.

**Peter Lewis** [00:21:49] It's alright, you're probably getting a few pings right now.

**Katharine Murphy** [00:21:51] It's got quite a lot of where's.

**Peter Lewis** [00:21:52] The copy from news desk?

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**Katharine Murphy** [00:21:55] Pretty much. But anyway, let's just move that away for a moment so I can focus here. So, yeah, look, he's gesturing in the direction of this new parliament and the new dynamics of the parliament. I think it'll be very interesting whether or not Labour appoints a speaker from the crossbench. The development today if was that Labour will now govern with 77 seats. Labour declared Gilmore in its column this afternoon. And and so that pushes them to 77. They could then get a speaker from within their own ranks and still command a majority on the on the floor of the House of Reps. But I think it's an open question unless Albanese is actually answering this question of what we're in here. It's been an open question certainly around the Government about whether or not they'll appoint a speaker from the crossbench, which would be very interesting if that's what they did. So, you know, look, it's a long way to go. Obviously Parliament's not even back yet. But yes, I think there is a very there is a very different tone. And if you watched every minute of the hustings and you thought, oh, you know, it's a B, Albanese doesn't look that confident, I can say that he looks entirely confident now.

**Peter Lewis** [00:23:20] Yeah. Like he's got through his initiation right. And now he is the man.

**Katharine Murphy** [00:23:26] Well it's sort of like it's his theatre I think. Whereas that sort of the campaign was not his thing. That's the first time he's done a campaign, obviously. Well, obviously not. His first political campaign was when he was 12. But but the first obviously as the Labour leader and putative prime minister. And I think he will have learnt a lot about the dynamics of campaigning that he didn't know prior to sort of going through the 2022 exercise. But look, Parliament and government, the institutions of Canberra, how this runs, how you know, how the Labour Party runs as an institution and governs. He's entirely fluent in that and I think he's sort of looked lot delighted really to be back in a theatre where he feels he can. He, you know, he has the law of the land and a certain degree of mastery.

**Peter Lewis** [00:24:21] Now I'm going to exercise, stand in and say privileges, because you see his poll position where he had a look at the polling. All you missed was I was humble bragging that we got it pretty close on toupee, Catherine. But we did ask a few questions this week. I'll just run through them quickly and get both you to to to reflect on it, if you will. And then we will go to questions. And there's a heap of questions in the chat neither I think we last spoke about 1200 people in the room. So it's great to be with you all. What is interesting on this, and if you are listening at home on the Guardian Pod, you'd need to go to Essential iReport.com. Fraser There is broad support for the labour agenda. If you look at all these issues, there is either strong or somewhat support and very low opposition, but also encouraging manufacturing, improving the status of women in the workplace, supporting increased the minimum wage, federal iconic renewables, universal access to early learning and a voice. And there's a bit of texture in terms of some of those. But what stood out to me in those was the primacy of the economic pieces and the pieces that are more and not so much what you'd call performative. None of it's performative, but more the stuff that is hard yards, economic start, rising wages and building stuff. Here is the stuff that people really want to see. And if I look at where the election map has ended up, Labour has held the Hunter, they've held the Central Coast, I've held provincial regions like the Illawarra Gilmore down into Geelong. This seems to me to be really important for the long term Labour

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government. There is, there is one constituents which is locking in the progressive vote and not fracturing that, but this is where the next election will be fought around. Building economic opportunity on the fringes of the city, in the regions as the economy faces global pressures. Is that right or wrong? Rubbish? Katharine, Richard, go me.

**Katharine Murphy** [00:26:30] Richard go ahead.

**Richard Denniss** [00:26:32] No, I think I think you're right. I think that while Labor will have a small but absolute majority in the Parliament, the combination of that with the number of Greens who've, you know, one seats from Labour and the Coalition now and the independents. Well, Labour has a small majority, there's a super majority of of parliamentarians that support, as you show in the slide, what the public wants. And it's weird because it's weird. There is an explanation, of course, but there's been a structural disconnect in Australia for quite some time between what an overwhelming majority of Australians wanted and what a majority of Parliament would go along with. And same sex marriage kind of broke that and it was brutal and traumatic for many of those involved. But it really sort of showed that just because he could use parliamentary numbers to stop change, it didn't stop the demand for change outside of parliament. And now we're seeing that wash through with the again, the coalition, the Liberals losing their literally heartland seats. And I've got a piece in The Monthly, I think it's out today saying, you know, if you lose your heartland, you still have a heart. What does it mean when a party loses its heartland? But it's gone and it's been replaced with independents who aren't going to agree with Labour and everything, and I'm going to agree with the Greens and everything. But if we kind of flipped it on its head and say, Right, there's a super majority of people in Parliament that won climate action, there's a super majority of people that want a federal act, there's a super majority that want to see all sorts of things, including an Indigenous voice, the Parliament. If Albanese, who used to be leader of government business in the House, he knows about Parliament. If he's actually willing to, he's not going to need to necessarily negotiate with any of those people in the Lower House. He will need the Greens in the Upper House. But if he combines the issues that Labour care about with the issues that there's a super majority in Parliament about, that the issues that he can get through the Senate, then I think the Liberals and the Nationals are going to look pretty irrelevant and pretty last century, quite frankly, if everybody plays to their strengths. Now let's not underestimate the potential for logjams amongst those that agree with each other, but I reckon there's plenty of opportunities here to pass a law ledge that will get the public onside and really show how out of touch and how frankly irrelevant the Tony Abbott and Scott Morrison view of the Liberal Party's been.

**Peter Lewis** [00:29:21] Yeah, Katharine, it feels like we've not just witnessed a change of government but maybe a change of political fault lines on these numbers. The Morrison Government position on most of these things is not where the debate is that it's kind of like they're over there in Tennant Creek with, you know, the sky after dark crew. But yeah and it's not, it's not a non agenda. Right. That there's a bit there.

**Katharine Murphy** [00:29:46] Yeah. Oh well that's, that's true. And, and you know as Richard says and you're getting it, there is, you know, this, this new parliament, the 47th will

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be a progressive parliament. And what occurred in the election campaign was a group, I suppose, that have sort of, you know, have been long mooted as as, you know, potentially decoupling from the Liberal Party on social issues, climate change, whatever else. Like we've been talking about this, you and I, for a long, long time, this sort of group of progressive liberal voter who, you know, Labour has been through God knows how many election cycles imagining, you know, it's going to sort of decouple and vote liberal, you know. GREEN Yeah, well. GREEN Right. I mean, that that hasn't happened, but but it did in 2022. Part of it was the disruption of having the liberals having, you know, having someone to vote for, for Liberals who can't vote Labour, tribal liberals who can't vote Labour. Then obviously having an independent, you know, was, was an important sort of step towards along that road of decoupling, I guess. Right. So I could vote for independents. I think a lot of Labour people also voted strategically for independence if they were. Those electorates and that sort of got them across the line. I agree that there is you know, that there is this sort of realignment. Well, I mean, this election is certainly the biggest electoral realignment since the Democrats. You know, on the on the centre right. On that and biggest realignment since the Democrats were formed in the late seventies.

**Peter Lewis** [00:31:37] They didn't change government, they were annoys. I reckon it's the biggest realignment since the split.

**Katharine Murphy** [00:31:42] Well, it's sort of maybe maybe I think we've got to we've got to see how these how this plays out. Right. There's the big thing that's happened is that this demographic is cohort who have long been rumoured to be consciously uncoupling from the Liberal Party actually did in this election campaign. It obviously then that's that's a realignment yet to be banked. Obviously people who did not vote liberal in this election campaign have got to basically be comfortable, I suppose, with, you know, with their alternate choice. Right. Be that the Greens in some seats in Brisbane or be that the new group of independents. But also we shouldn't forget that, you know, that a number of Liberal seats in the city fell as well. Right. Higgins And in those seats, you know, Liberals voted Labour. So, you know, there was obviously it's a big, big shift this result. It's a lot to get your head around, particularly if you were like me and not really thinking that this would happen until I saw it is quite a lot to unpick here. And yeah, look, it's certainly, you know, as electoral realignments go, it's big. But I think we've still got to see how it's sort of how it's proved, how it's proved up over the next three years to see whether or not Australians are going to sort of, I suppose, de decouple from their preferred major party of choice in this election cycle. The Liberal Party, whether that's a sort of transient protest, just vote or whether it is a structural shift. I think we've got to just wait and see on that front.

**Peter Lewis** [00:33:35] Yeah. Yeah. You know, I banged on about this for a number of months saying that government only changes in a wave and Labour wins big or not at all. And I think what's interesting is that Labour hasn't picked up the 20 seats that a new incoming government normally does, but the leaves are basically lost 20. So there was a massive outgoing. The tide tartly went out on the Libs. But rather than just labour surfing it in, there are a whole lot of other people that have surfed that into shore. And yeah.

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**Katharine Murphy** [00:34:04] But I do think that that's that's absolutely right. And now there's this sort of like, you know, I think in international affairs, there's this concept called the buffer state. Right. And in terms of now the now the independents, the larger crossbench is a buffer state. Right. So and but I do think, though, that that can sort of looking at that, I suppose, you know, Labour didn't absolutely kick this into charge. Labour didn't absolutely kind of surf along on a big progressive victory, which is what we're used to in campaigns when election when when Labour wins from opposition. I do think so. What? It's sort of like we need to understand how difficult this campaign was, I think for the Labour Party to hold its its traditional blue collar territories as it did, you know, the Hunter seats around their regional seats. They held those territories as well as kind of picking up ground in in sort of more progressive urban contests as well. And that is just, you know, that is incredibly hard thing to do in an age of atomisation, an age of tribalism to put together, literally pieced together a coalition of interests. And sometimes the you know, the the interests of individuals are viewed as being diametrically opposed. Right. I do think that's the sort of under valued element of this this election win for Labour is that somehow somehow they managed to keep this sort of, you know, this this sort of coalition between traditional supporters and new progressive.

**Peter Lewis** [00:35:51] And in a way, these numbers show. Why? Because the issues they ran on had that broad support. They'd just been distorted by the binary nature of the two party state. And that's kind of broken up. Yeah.

**Richard Denniss** [00:36:04] Sorry. But just quickly on that I think is spot on. But let's not underestimate that at the next election rather than by usually an election everyone's got. I asked the Government. But at the next election there'll be independents looking at how close the Liberals are in Deakin, looking at how close to losing Paul Fletcher was in Bradfield. And it's, it's not obvious that even in three years time the Liberals will be the ones defining the seats where they will put their resources. So yeah, this, you know, having looked for 20 years at polling and why people don't vote for independents and why they don't vote for minor parties, there's two reasons that come out in every focus group and every poll, and that is, I don't want to waste my vote or, you know, not quite sure what they stand for. Now we have independents and the Greens winning seats left, right and centre. They're going to be front and centre for another three years and people now know that it's not a wasted vote. So I think there's more libs, they'll be worried, particularly Michael Sukkar and and former communications minister who suffered a 15% swing, Paul Fletcher.

**Peter Lewis** [00:37:18] And this is, this is without a single seat going to Labour in Queensland as well where they were at a low tide or. Well I feel like I'm about to lose my job as host. Can I just quickly go through these slides? Then we'll go to questions and I'll look the this slide shows there has been there is majority support now for Uluru statement including an indigenous voice in parliament but it's taught 53 but that's the first time it's been about 53. So I might just quickly go through the days and then get you guys to give an overview. So voice is one thing that we need to sort of think through how that's going to play out and what that does to this alliance. On the other side, there is this we asked at your request, I might add, Catherine, whether people thought Labour's target on 2030 was enough or not enough. And you can see they're pretty tight. They're 41, 35, 24% unsure.

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That's a potential left flank battle line and the other ones that are just kind of nice for people to know is that we actually do like the idea that there are more views being represented in Parliament 2 to 1 and we think democracy is working better. So that's also good. 47% satisfied with democracy, up from 35. And that wasn't right after the 2019 election when none of us was satisfied in democracy. That was in 2017 when we thought that, you know, at the time was going out on the government. So I'm going to stop the slides there. But I guess they have got voice, climate and democracy. I don't know if you want to sort of wave a hot take into that, Catherine, for me.

**Katharine Murphy** [00:38:56] Well, maybe a tepid take. No, not I keep. Sorry. Now, look, I do think that, you know, they really interesting issues to kind of group together I think and we can sort of look at it just quickly through the prism of the new liberal leadership. Obviously, after an election result, like the one the Liberal Party had lost Saturday night, you would think that the Liberal Party would be would be accepting that there is now a super majority in favour of climate action. But Peter Dutton is showing no signs of putting down the cudgels, at least on medium term action. Interestingly though, in terms of the voice, which where bipartisan support will actually be quite important to running a successful referendum, Peter Dutton, the guy who walked out on the apology to the Stolen Generations in 2008, did say yesterday that that he is well, he didn't say yes, but he didn't say no either. He said, I just want to think this through. I understand I did the wrong thing in 2008. You know, we've got to sort of manage this through out our processes and work out where we want to go with this, which is sort of which is a which is a pretty big deal coming from him, actually, where he's lined up on some of these debates. I think it's extremely difficult for Peter Dutton to basically get agreement in the Coalition for a constitutionally enshrined voice to Parliament. I think that will be extremely difficult because in in his faction, the right faction of the Liberal Party, there's a lot of sort of, you know, well I mean it's ridiculous phrase in the Australian context to say constitutional originalists. This makes no sense at all in our democracy. But it's a similar disposition, right? Some people just don't want, you know, the framework added to and there are a number of them in the Liberal Party and that's what made it extremely difficult for Ken Wyatt to try and progress this agenda. And of course, Scott Morrison famously came out, said to ken Wyatt. Yes. Let's do it. Then discovered that basically get rolled in the party room. If it was. Yes, let's do it. So, I don't know. Look, maybe.

**Peter Lewis** [00:41:24] The absence of Barnaby from national leadership change anything.

**Katharine Murphy** [00:41:27] But this is the thing. So there's a couple of interesting moving.

**Peter Lewis** [00:41:30] And who is that deputy leader? I'd never heard of that before.

**Katharine Murphy** [00:41:34] Perin Davey? Yeah. She's a New South Wales Nationals senator. Terrific. But anyway. But yeah, look, it'll be, it'll, it'll be difficult for Dutton, but if he decides he wants to do it as well, he's got the cachet on the right, maybe he carries on people. So that's a bit of a watch this space. So I think.

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**Peter Lewis** [00:41:52] Richard, on the climate issue, there is probably two competing arguments going on depending what side of the great red divide you sit. I think Labour's position is let's just lock in the mandate we have and the Greens are pretty set in saying we need to be more ambitious. How do you see that playing out?

**Richard Denniss** [00:42:14] Oh look, I think that again, you know, there's a super majority that says let's do more. How how will parliamentary dynamics either reflect what's happened outside parliament, which is get on and do stuff or get in the way of it.

**Peter Lewis** [00:42:31] Although those findings didn't say do more, that it was kind of split, wasn't it? It was pretty.

**Richard Denniss** [00:42:36] Obvious that the Greens are going to say we were elected on a mandate to do more. The teal candidates are going to say they were elected on a mandate to do more. Everyone's going to rightly say that 43 is an arbitrary number. You know, even the Business Council wants 50. But you can see why a newly elected Labour government is going to start with. This is what we promised to do. This is what we're going to do. You know, I think we'll see a debate about quality, not quantity, 43%. All right. What's the role of dodgy offsets? What's the role of fossil fuel subsidies? What about building new coal mines? What about new guys like this?

**Peter Lewis** [00:43:16] You know, there's lots of debates within the 43, is what you're saying.

**Richard Denniss** [00:43:19] I would say above the 43. I mean, I am not Robinson Crusoe on this. But, you know, as someone as an economist interested in climate policy for 20 years, I couldn't tell you the number of times we've changed the base year and the percentage number that we're willing to die in a ditch over. All right. The targets aren't meaningless, but they aren't everything. But they take because they're concrete, because they're a number, you know, they something that you either support or oppose. And I think that if the Greens are smart and the independents are smart and I think they are, they're going to find a way to turn it into 43 plus. It'll be all right. You can have your target, but you've got to increase the integrity of what they all that means. And we're not going to we're not going to let some farmers promise that not chop down an extra tree or whatever in order to get to your target. And I think that you'll see the fight about no new coal, no new gas coming over the top of 43, saying, great, you've passed that target. But the real problem we face is X and Y and Z. So I think there will be a willing debate about the target. I can understand why Labour will want to stick with what they took to the campaign, but I think the climate debate domestically and internationally will overwhelm me. So, I mean, the Pacific Island states have all made it clear that they want Australia to start building new coal mines. Is does that make it about building new coal mines, a placing of the Greens or a centrepiece of our national security? Like, you know, we need to kind of open up our field of vision and

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see that things like 43 versus 30, you know, and not the be all and end all when it comes to climate fight.

**Peter Lewis** [00:45:11] Hi, Katharine. I think you and I had kind of similar take some of this, which is part of the story this government is going to be learning from the mistakes of the the Rudd Gillard era. I've kind of chanced my arm running a tortured metaphor on second marriages in your August publication today, but I am interested in the echoes of what went wrong managing climate last time and whether that is relevant today and how you see that playing out over the next months.

**Katharine Murphy** [00:45:40] Well, look, it's it'll be a really defining debate in this Parliament for sure. I think Anthony Albanese has thought a lot about the Rudd Gillard period, what went wrong and how you might try and prevent those mistakes from repeating. But he's not a magician at the end of the day, he's just a prime minister. But I do think he has thought a lot about this and at part of his thinking about not repeating the Rudd Gillard thing is having a concrete agenda that. Able to be implemented in one term of government. So you don't get into the dreadful rod scenario, which was that climate change is the great moral challenge of our time. But when you run aground with your agenda, then you, then you bang. Then you're seen in the public space to backtrack and walk off it. I think I think that's where sort of 43% in the architecture that they have put to voters at this election sort of represents this idea about what can we do, what, what is doable and doesn't sort of get us into that dreadful bind that we found ourselves in, in the Rudd-Gillard period, which was then, you know, basically sort of accelerated the weaponization of climate action for a decade.

**Peter Lewis** [00:47:01] Do you think that the libs and then Nats still see benefit in weaponizing it or is that the other way?

**Katharine Murphy** [00:47:07] Well, no, this is the thing about Peter Dutton that's been interesting. I would have thought that he would suit for peace, that he would that he would come in on 2030 with with a signal that, you know, that this is doable or this is something that we can get our heads around. I think it's very obvious from Peter Dutton's opening comments in the leadership that he thinks that climate change, once the Labour Party gets into actual mechanisms and structures in order to deliver it will sort of basically default to the turgid cost of living argument that the Liberals have used, basically just sort of to, to work against climate action for a decade. That is that's clearly Dutton's working supposition. Energy prices are going to go up. Cost of living is going to go up. I think he's sort of limbering up basically to paint a picture to voters that if you act too prematurely in the medium term, you know, it's basically a world of pain for consumers. That's where he's going with it. So, like, I totally agree with you and Richard that there is this super majority for climate action, but it's not occurring in a vacuum. It's occurring against a major party opponent, which has been very good at weaponising this issue for it for ten years. So, you know, anyway, it's it is the defining debate of this Parliament that it's quite complicated for Albanese to manage. And I think that's, you know, if we see potentially.

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**Peter Lewis** [00:48:37] A bit of friction on the left, won't be terrible either.

**Katharine Murphy** [00:48:39] Well not necessarily, but it's sort of it depends like I'm very hopeful that that, you know, I was disappointed with Dutton's positioning yesterday. I, you know, he sort of had a form of wedged on the Integrity Commission. He's going to basically push that through. He pushed Sussan Ley out there to basically do the apology to women. I know you didn't vote for it, so now you hate us, but, you know, we're listening to you. And I thought, okay, maybe he'll sue for pace on climate, but he did not. So that is that is a dynamic that, you know, Albanese and others is going to have to manage in this time.

**Peter Lewis** [00:49:15] So I look at 11 minutes to the hour I'm getting this is why you need ebony and bass events, but I am getting some questions from the floor. Alistair McCulloch asks Catherine, is this the first election that Murdoch hasn't been on the winning side? If so, what implications do you draw?

**Katharine Murphy** [00:49:31] I don't think Murdoch was on the winning side in 2007 either, although it was mixed.

**Peter Lewis** [00:49:38] The Telegraph put down the POM Bobs to quote David Penberthy.

**Katharine Murphy** [00:49:42] That is true. That is true. But look, I think every election I've covered, every single one. It's very difficult because, you know, the sort of the default of the Murdoch media is is you know, is to be hostile to to Labour governments. It's just a question of whether the hostile is sort of muted or the hostility, I should say, is muted or whether it's on full, you know, dolled up to a level. Look, I will also I wouldn't rush to judgement. There's a lot sort of being said in slightly triumphalist sort of tones that look, you know, the mainstream media in general and the Murdoch press specifically, this election result shows they have no influence anymore. Look, maybe maybe it does. But again, I think, you know, it's sort of it's still a big issue. It's still a big issue. And it's not only the Murdoch press and there are a lot of institutional interests in Australia that are hostile to progressive governments, always been thus ever will be us. And in terms of influence. Well, look, yes, the mainstream media in general, all of us, we're not as influential as we were 20 years ago, pre-internet. That's absolutely right. But I wouldn't say that the that the sort of hostility that that accompanied Albanese largely from the Murdoch media. Played no role in the election. I think that would be that would be with due respect. I think that would be quite a no.

**Peter Lewis** [00:51:22] There is an argument with a fair round. Labour would have won a bigger majority.

**Katharine Murphy** [00:51:26] It's these things are quite hard to measure. And I wouldn't, you know, I would not reach some sort of conclusion that that that, you know, these ipso

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facto labour wins election means that the, you know, the concentration of centre right highly polarising at times highly partisan media plays no role in shaping public consciousness. I think I think I think there is still a contribution there.

**Richard Denniss** [00:51:57] Um, just quickly, Pete, I mean The Courier-Mail raged against Annastacia Palaszczuk for no effect for three elections in a row. The Herald Sun thinks that Daniel Andrews should have lost the last election that he won in a landslide. I think the Murdoch press is much better at shifting debates than it is about shifting the votes. It draws enormous attention to what it wants to put on the front page. The ABC then follows it. So I think the Murdoch press plays a very important role in setting the agenda of what we're allowed to talk sensibly about in Australia. But it clearly doesn't shift votes in the way that perhaps people fear it does.

**Peter Lewis** [00:52:39] One of the ironies was that it's all out. Attack on the Teals merely raised its name recognition, which, if you talk to them, was the actually the one challenge that they needed to make that.

**Katharine Murphy** [00:52:52] Segue from that perspective, it's definitely a mixed bag. Certainly that elevation of name recognition was extremely helpful to the tales. But it's just. Look, I think it's. You know, to say that they said that the Murdoch media had no impact on this campaign. I, I don't think that's true.

**Peter Lewis** [00:53:12] So how does Labour manage today? They ignore and I don't want to sound this whining about 7 minutes left but does labour. That the template, I think both for the Howard era, the Rudd Gillard era and the Morrison era, has been to govern through the Murdoch tabloids. Hmm. What's an alternate? Did I just turn off that tap? They'd just do everything through the Guardian and Australia Institute.

**Katharine Murphy** [00:53:44] I think not. No, no, no, no. Look, I don't think an Albanese government look I think those are plenty people in Labour very annoyed with how the sort of swathes of the media conducted themselves in terms of election coverage. I think people are genuinely furious about that and still furious about it. But I don't think Anthony Albanese's 30 years in public life would lead one to a quick conclusion that that he would see, you know, some sort of freezing out or payback as his response to that. I'd be very surprised if that occurred. But I think it's I think, you know, obviously, I just look, my own feeling is that he'll play it straight. And that's that is my feeling.

**Peter Lewis** [00:54:33] And, you know, in a way, the ball's in News Limited's court as well. And there are fine journalists, particularly people like Sam Maiden, who are working for News.com, which is not the same. News.com is not a tabloid. You know, there are pockets within that organisation that are not the caricature that we all say News Limited is going to be interesting. So we do a couple more questions are quickly gone. Sue Masters ask what

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about the two elections coming up? Same tactics or nuance like does this election tell us anything about what's going to come up over the next 12 months?

**Katharine Murphy** [00:55:07] What, in state elections.

**Peter Lewis** [00:55:09] Yeah. Yeah. Like we've got to in New South Wales following pretty quickly.

**Katharine Murphy** [00:55:13] Well look I think just quickly, I think basically the sort of that climate 200 community independents model for campaigning has now been proven up. Right. It seems likely that that model will be taken into state contests. But also, I think we need to bear in mind as as concerned citizens in a democracy that once a model is proven up, it can be utilised in a number of different ways. So while while, you know, obviously this was sort of this created a bridge for the party voters to decouple from the Liberal Party and vote for candidates that Liberal voters felt like they could they could vote for. There's a million ways.

**Peter Lewis** [00:56:06] Could you set up a pack and rock of brown independents to take out Labour heartland? Right. You know.

**Katharine Murphy** [00:56:12] It's this is the thing about innovations in political contests. Once you prove up a model, it can be utilised in a bunch of different ways. Obviously, issues have to be salient. I mean, that's that's the point. Like, obviously, independents could not have won the number of seats that they did on a on a platform that was meaningless to voters because then obviously no one would vote for them. So it needs to be conditions conducive to sort of successful for you proven up alternative model. But I do think we need to bear that in mind that we have in this election cycle demonstrate. I did. You know, there's a proven out model now that can be deployed against either of the major parties on a range of issues.

**Peter Lewis** [00:57:00] Yeah. And interesting, the tails didn't go any Labour seats this time. I think the dynamic on the progressive side will change markedly if they do.

**Katharine Murphy** [00:57:08] Yeah, well, it's sort of it's interesting to sort of think I mean, I don't you know, I don't say that that that's an immediate proposition that any of us a countenancing. But I'm just I'm just stating an obvious fact. Right. Like we've had Clive Palmer, you know, a very high wealth individual try and basically sort of, you know, expend huge amounts of money in order to get political representation over a couple of election cycles, that that model has not been proven up as a success. But the independence model in this election campaign has been proven up as a success. It'll be interesting to see who learns from it and who who tries to sort of make it, reconfigure it and make it work in a

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different style of campaign. And also just I think as a Labour Party acknowledges that the Greens ground game in Brisbane, in metropolitan Brisbane just killed them in terms of efficiency and and efficacy. And I think it'll be interesting to see what both, both major parties looking at that, learning from it and and trying to implement it in, in the contests that are coming up.

**Richard Denniss [00:58:22]** Yeah, more of a more upbeat than that. I mean, the couple of things. One, Labour, you know, they're never going to thank the Greens for this, but Labour kind of match fit in having to cover their left flank while appealing to the middle because they've actually had that side with the Greens for 20 years and you know, losing Melbourne, Lindsay Tanner, his old seat, you know, Hurt and Labour have been alive to that threat for a long time. The Libs haven't been so. So I think the tables will continue to go after. I'm not saying they won't go after like an independent won't after Labour seat, but they've got to kind of have a three way race with the Greens there. It's open to rein in the Liberal seats. And also let's not forget remember when Cory Bernardi was going to sit up the conservative version of Get Up and about 14 people joined. Like after every election the Conservatives pretend that the silent majority they speak for is silent and majority when actually it's clearly a vocal minority. Yeah, that's.

**Peter Lewis [00:59:28]** Terrific.

**Richard Denniss [00:59:29]** No, but as Katharine said, you actually need the salience of the issues that motivate people. And these people are just angry and bitter, you know, and whenever they say, we're going to rise up, we're going to bring it with us, no one comes. So yeah, they could use the model. But history says there is a thousand people watching our webinar tonight. You know, the IPA has got a lot more money. I guarantee there's not a thousand people watching a webinar of theirs tonight. So, you know, Katharine's right. The model can be deployed by anyone, but the model only works when there's a lot of people who genuinely care and believe and I don't think that's there.

**Peter Lewis [01:00:11]** And I it's 7:00. You've got to file, Katherine. We've got to go and watch ABC News. Yes, I've got to do the wrap up. Thanks, everyone. You know where to catch Katharine and me on Twitter. And Richard's got a weird one that I can never quite remember. Subscribe to everything. I used to be proud of it. We're actually going to take a month off, and we might do a bit of a survey of the people that come just to say what whether this is the format they want, whether this is the time, like what time works for them. I know there's been a bit of chatter around that. So look, thanks for being part of this conversation. I feel like we've this is kind of the end of season one, Katharine, that started in the middle of the pandemic doing what the what's going on. It's ended up in this fantastic meeting that we have with all these lovely people with Ebony. Every fortnight we'll work out how we can keep this going, but we can't have all night a bit of a breather I reckon. But thanks for breaking your work stride tonight. Been awesome. Thanks, Richard. Thanks to the team at the Australia Institute for making the backend work so seamlessly and you are just a great, great community and we're thinking about how we can build better community around

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this as well. So watch this space. VIVA LA ALBANESE We will see a Labour Government in action and will be back in a month's time. Thanks, guys.

**Richard Denniss** [01:01:34] Thanks, Pete. Thanks, Katharine.

**Katharine Murphy** [01:01:35] See you guys.