



RESEARCH NOTE

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Queensland Election 1995



The Australian Labor Party (ALP) Government was returned with the narrowest of margins at the Queensland Legislative Assembly elections held on 15 July 1995. The fate of the Government was held in the balance for ten days after polling while postal votes were counted. In the last seat to be declared (Mundingburra in the northern city of Townsville), the Labor Party candidate retained the seat by 16 votes, thus giving the ALP a one seat majority in the 89 seat Assembly.

The Labor Party lost 9 seats to give it 45 seats, while the National Party, the senior coalition partner,

gained 3 seats to give it 29 and the Liberal Party gained 5 seats for a total of 14. The provincial city seat of Gladstone was won by the independent Mrs Liz Cunningham. The decline in support for the Labor Party was most damaging in North Queensland where two seats were lost, and in the south-eastern suburbs of Brisbane where the Government's controversial eastern tollway proposal contributed to the loss of four seats.

The Labor Party's share of first preference votes fell by 5.8% to 42.9%, the lowest vote recorded by the party since the 1986 election. The National Party again outpolled their coalition partners and recorded a 2.5% increase for a total of 26.3%. The Liberal Party received 22.7% of the vote, an increase of 2.3%. The Queensland Greens contesting a Queensland election for the first time as a registered party received 2.9% of the vote, while the Australian Democrats contesting a slightly smaller number of seats than the Greens received 1.3%.

In two party preferred terms the Labor Party's vote decreased by

7.2% to 46.7%, the lowest winning two party preferred vote recorded in Australia since the Playford era in South Australia in the 1960s. The Labor Party's ability to retain government without obtaining a majority of the two party preferred vote reflected their ability to retain marginal metropolitan and provincial seats and the level of 'wasted' votes recorded by the coalition parties (notably the National Party) in very safe rural seats.

In the Brisbane metropolitan area the Labor Party won 29 of the 39 seats on offer while the Liberals won nine and the Nationals one. Of the 45 seats won overall by the Labor Party, only 11 were won with a two party preferred vote of over 60% and none with a two party preferred vote of over 70%. For the coalition 28 of their 43 seats were won with a two party preferred vote of over 60%, including nine which were won with a two party preferred vote of over 70%.

The narrowness of the ALP victory was reflected in the fact that 18 of the 45 ALP seats were won after the distribution of

1995 Queensland Legislative Assembly Election

| | Seats | Votes | | Swing |
|---------------------------|-------|---------|------|-------|
| | | No | % | |
| Australian Labor Party | 45 | 773585 | 42.9 | -5.8 |
| National Party | 29 | 473497 | 26.3 | +2.5 |
| Liberal Party | 14 | 410083 | 22.7 | +2.3 |
| Australian Democrats | .. | 22598 | 1.3 | +1.0 |
| Queensland Greens | .. | 51748 | 2.9 | +2.9 |
| Confederated Action Party | .. | 9329 | 0.5 | +0.5 |
| Others | 1 | 62640 | 3.5 | -3.3 |
| Formal Votes | | 1803480 | 98.3 | |
| Informal Votes | | 32061 | 1.7 | |
| Total Votes | | 1835541 | 91.4 | |

preferences while only 6 Coalition seats were required to go to preferences. Of the 32 seats now regarded as being marginal (requiring a two party swing of less than 6% to change hands) 25 are held by the Labor Party. The results in two seats (Greenslopes, won by the Liberal Party and Mundingburra, won by the Labor Party) are being challenged in a Court of Disputed Returns.

A total of 290 candidates contested the 1995 election, 74 of whom were women (13 successful). The Labor Party contested all of the 89 seats while the National and Liberal parties, in an uncharacteristic display of Coalition harmony, avoided three-cornered contests in all but two seats and fielded 44 and 46 candidates respectively. The Australian Democrats contested 21 seats with endorsed candidates

Electoral System

The Queensland Parliament is unique amongst the States in that it has only one house. The upper house was abolished in 1922. Salient features of the Queensland electoral system are:

- The state is divided into 89 single member electorates.
- The *Electoral Distribution Act 1991* allowed for a variation in enrolment of up to 10% above or below the quota for all Districts except those over 100,000 sq km in area, where the quota may be departed from by adding a number of 'phantom electors' equal to 2% of the area of the District. Thus, for a District of 200,000 sq km 4000 (2% of 200,000) phantom electors may be added to the District's enrolment. This adjusted enrolment figure must then comply with the 10% variation rule.
- Elections must be held every three years.
- Enrolment and voting are compulsory.
- Optional preferential voting used.

and a further 11 seats with unendorsed candidates, while the Queensland Greens contested 28 seats.

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Queensland Elections 1950-1995

| Election | ALP | LP | NP | AD | DLP | Grn | Oth | Total | ALP | LP/NP |
|-------------------------------|------|------|------|-----|------------------------|-----|-----|-------|------|-------|
| <i>First Preference Votes</i> | | | | | <i>Two Party Votes</i> | | | | | |
| 1950 | 46.9 | 29.9 | 19.2 | | | | 4.0 | 100.0 | 48.5 | 51.5 |
| 1953 | 53.2 | 21.3 | 18.7 | | | | 6.7 | 100.0 | 54.2 | 45.8 |
| 1956 | 51.2 | 25.1 | 19.3 | | | | 4.4 | 100.0 | 51.6 | 48.4 |
| 1957 | 28.9 | 23.2 | 20.0 | | 23.4 | | 4.5 | 100.0 | | |
| 1960 | 39.9 | 24.0 | 19.5 | | 12.3 | | 4.3 | 100.0 | 44.0 | 56.0 |
| 1963 | 43.8 | 23.8 | 20.3 | | 7.2 | | 4.9 | 100.0 | 46.4 | 53.6 |
| 1966 | 43.8 | 25.5 | 19.3 | | 6.3 | | 5.1 | 100.0 | 47.2 | 52.8 |
| 1969 | 45.0 | 23.7 | 21.2 | | 7.2 | | 3.0 | 100.0 | 47.7 | 52.3 |
| 1972 | 46.8 | 22.2 | 20.0 | | 7.7 | | 3.3 | 100.0 | 49.2 | 50.8 |
| 1974 | 36.0 | 31.1 | 27.9 | | 1.9 | | 3.1 | 100.0 | 38.5 | 61.5 |
| 1977 | 42.8 | 25.2 | 27.1 | 1.6 | | | 3.2 | 100.0 | 45.4 | 54.6 |
| 1980 | 41.5 | 26.9 | 27.9 | 1.4 | | | 2.3 | 100.0 | 45.3 | 54.7 |
| 1983 | 44.0 | 14.9 | 38.9 | 0.8 | | | 1.4 | 100.0 | 46.7 | 53.3 |
| 1986 | 41.3 | 16.5 | 39.6 | 0.6 | | | 1.9 | 100.0 | 45.9 | 54.1 |
| 1989 | 50.3 | 21.1 | 24.1 | 0.4 | | 0.3 | 3.8 | 100.0 | 54.3 | 45.7 |
| 1992 | 48.7 | 20.4 | 23.7 | 0.3 | | | 6.8 | 100.0 | 53.9 | 46.2 |
| 1995 | 42.9 | 22.7 | 26.3 | 1.3 | | 2.9 | 4.0 | 100.0 | 46.7 | 53.3 |
| <i>Seats Won</i> | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1950 | 42 | 11 | 20 | | | | 2 | 75 | | |
| 1953 | 50 | 8 | 15 | | | | 2 | 75 | | |
| 1956 | 49 | 8 | 16 | | | | 2 | 75 | | |
| 1957 | 20 | 18 | 24 | | 11 | | 2 | 75 | | |
| 1960 | 25 | 20 | 26 | | 4 | | 3 | 78 | | |
| 1963 | 26 | 20 | 26 | | 1 | | 5 | 78 | | |
| 1966 | 26 | 20 | 27 | | 1 | | 4 | 78 | | |
| 1969 | 31 | 19 | 26 | | 1 | | 1 | 78 | | |
| 1972 | 33 | 21 | 26 | | | | 2 | 82 | | |
| 1974 | 11 | 30 | 39 | | | | 2 | 82 | | |
| 1977 | 23 | 24 | 35 | | | | | 82 | | |
| 1980 | 25 | 22 | 35 | | | | | 82 | | |
| 1983 | 32 | 8 | 41 | | | | 1 | 82 | | |
| 1986 | 30 | 10 | 49 | | | | | 89 | | |
| 1989 | 54 | 9 | 26 | | | | | 89 | | |
| 1992 | 54 | 9 | 26 | | | | | 89 | | |
| 1995 | 45 | 14 | 29 | | | | 1 | 89 | | |