



Curtin University

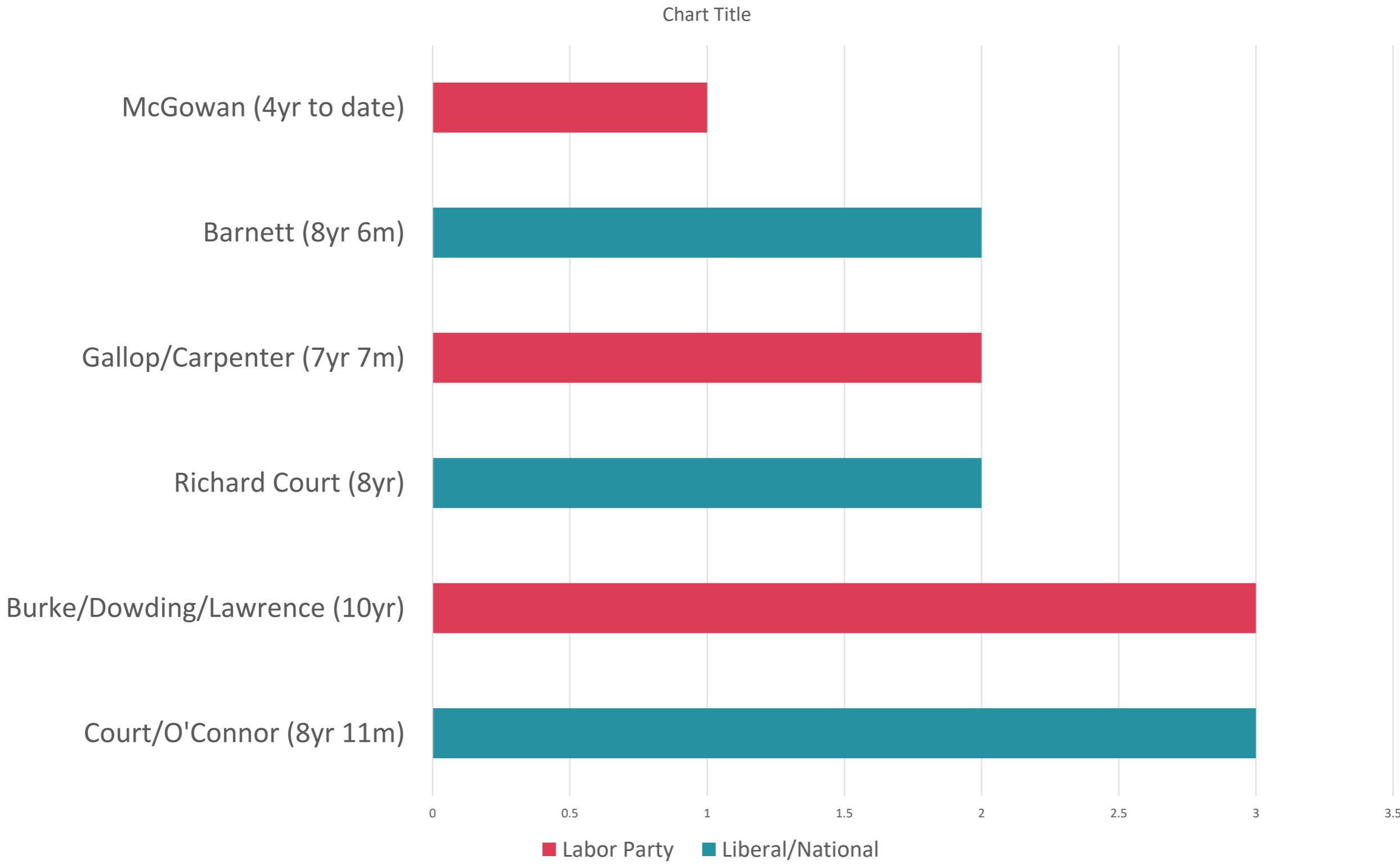
The 2021 State Election

John Phillimore
Martin Drum
Kathryn Shine

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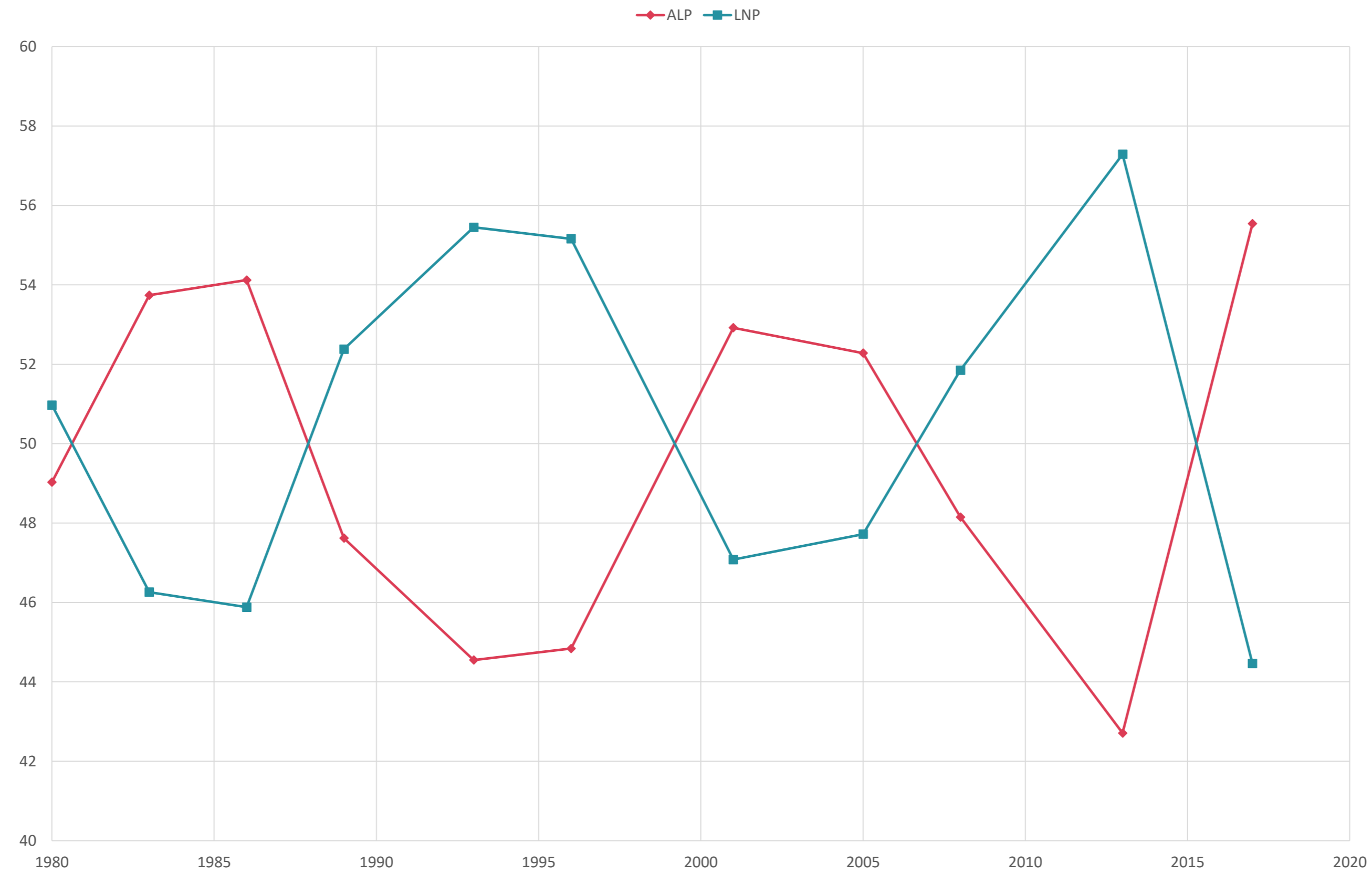
Perth | Kalgoorlie | Dubai | Malaysia | Singapore

Terms in Office 1974-2017





Two Party Preferred Vote WA Legislative Assembly Elections



WA Election Results 1993-2017

“Saving the Furniture”

Election	Labor	Liberal	Nats	Indpt Liberal	Indpt Labor	Total
1993	24	26	6	1	..	57
1996	19	29	6	2	1	57
2001	32	16	5	3	1	57
2005	32	18	5	2	..	57
2008	28	24	4	2	1	59
2013	21	31	7	..	..	59
2017	41	13	5	..	..	59

2017 Election Result

Party (Candidates)	Votes	% Votes	Swing	Seats Won	Seat Change from 2013
Labor (59)	557,794	42.2	9.1	41	+20
Liberal (59)	412,710	31.2	-15.9	13	-18
Greens (59)	117,723	8.9	0.5	..	..
Nationals (16)	71,313	5.4	-0.7	5	-2
Pauline Hanson's One Nation (35)	65,192	4.9	4.9	..	..
Australian Christians (45)	27,724	2.1	0.3	..	..
Shooters, Fishers & Farmers (19)	17,317	1.3	1.3	..	..
Others (123)	51,867	3.9	-	..	..
TOTAL Formal (415)	1,321,640	95.5	1.5	59	..
Two Party Preferred Vote (estimate)					
Labor	733,738	55.5	+12.8		
Liberal / National	587,353	44.5	-12.8		

2017 Election vs 2021 Newspoll

Party	2017 Election (% vote)	2021 Newspoll (% vote)	Change (% points)
Labor	42.2	59	+17
Liberal	31.2	23	-8
Greens	8.9	8	-1
Nationals	5.4	2	-3
One Nation	4.9	3	-2
Others	7.3	5	-2
Two Party Preferred			
Labor	55.5	68	+12.5
Liberal / National	44.5	32	-12.5

Leadership – 2021 Newspoll

	McGowan (%)	Kirkup (%)
Approve	88	29
Disapprove	10	41
Net approval	+78	-12
Preferred Premier	83	10

Source: Newspoll 19 February 2021, sample size 1034, online-only, max. error 3%

Regional variability of swings 2017 election

Region	2PP Swing to Labor (%)
East Metro	12.6
North Metro	13
South Metro	15
South West	11.2
Agricultural	6.6
Mining & Pastoral	8.5
TOTAL	12.8

Source: Ben Raue, The Tally Room, <https://www.tallyroom.com.au/41173>

Electoral Pendulum (1): Swing to ALP of ~6% = 6 more seats

Labor Seats		Liberal-National Seats	
Seat	Margin	Seat	Margin
Joondalup	ALP 1.0%	Hillarys	LIB 0.1%
Kingsley	ALP 1.2%	Dawesville	LIB 0.9%
Murray-Wellington	ALP 1.8%	Geraldton*	NAT 1.3%
Jandakot	ALP 2.0%	Darling Range	LIB 3.5%
Pilbara	ALP 2.3%	Riverton	LIB 4.4%
Kalamunda	ALP 2.4%	Scarborough	LIB 5.8%
Bicton	ALP 3.5%	Kalgoorlie	LIB 6.2%
Baldivis	ALP 3.7% vs IND	South Perth	LIB 7.2%
Mount Lawley	ALP 4.0%	Nedlands	LIB 8.1%
Burns Beach	ALP 4.3%	Bateman	LIB 8.2%
Albany	ALP 5.9%	Carine	LIB 10.6%
Balcatta	ALP 7.9%	Churchlands	LIB 11.7%
Southern River	ALP 7.9%	Cottesloe	LIB 14.1%
Wanneroo	ALP 8.9%	Vasse	LIB 14.7%

Electoral Pendulum (2): Swing to ALP of ~8% = 8 more seats

Labor Seats		Liberal-National Seats	
Seat	Margin	Seat	Margin
Joondalup	ALP 1.0%	Hillarys	LIB 0.1%
Kingsley	ALP 1.2%	Dawesville	LIB 0.9%
Murray-Wellington	ALP 1.8%	Geraldton*	NAT 1.3%
Jandakot	ALP 2.0%	Darling Range	LIB 3.5%
Pilbara	ALP 2.3%	Riverton	LIB 4.4%
Kalamunda	ALP 2.4%	Scarborough	LIB 5.8%
Bicton	ALP 3.5%	Kalgoorlie	LIB 6.2%
Baldivis	ALP 3.7% vs IND	South Perth	LIB 7.2%
Mount Lawley	ALP 4.0%	Nedlands	LIB 8.1%
Burns Beach	ALP 4.3%	Bateman	LIB 8.2%
Albany	ALP 5.9%	Carine	LIB 10.6%
Balcatta	ALP 7.9%	Churchlands	LIB 11.7%
Southern River	ALP 7.9%	Cottesloe	LIB 14.1%
Wanneroo	ALP 8.9%	Vasse	LIB 14.7%

Electoral Pendulum (3): Swing to ALP of ~10% = 10 more seats

Labor Seats		Liberal-National Seats	
Seat	Margin	Seat	Margin
Joondalup	ALP 1.0%	Hillarys	LIB 0.1%
Kingsley	ALP 1.2%	Dawesville	LIB 0.9%
Murray-Wellington	ALP 1.8%	Geraldton*	NAT 1.3%
Jandakot	ALP 2.0%	Darling Range	LIB 3.5%
Pilbara	ALP 2.3%	Riverton	LIB 4.4%*
Kalamunda	ALP 2.4%	Scarborough	LIB 5.8%
Bicton	ALP 3.5%	Kalgoorlie	LIB 6.2%
Baldivis	ALP 3.7% vs IND	South Perth	LIB 7.2%*
Mount Lawley	ALP 4.0%	Nedlands	LIB 8.1%
Burns Beach	ALP 4.3%	Bateman	LIB 8.2%*
Albany	ALP 5.9%	Carine	LIB 10.6%
Balcatta	ALP 7.9%	Churchlands	LIB 11.7%
Southern River	ALP 7.9%	Cottesloe	LIB 14.1%
Wanneroo	ALP 8.9%	Vasse	LIB 14.7%

Retiring MLAs

Labor	Liberal
Fran Logan (Cockburn)	John McGrath (South Perth)
Josie Farrer (Kimberley)	Mike Nahan (Riverton)
Janine Freeman (Mirrabooka)	Dean Nalder (Bateman)
Mick Murray (Collie-Preston)	
Peter Watson (Albany)	
Ben Wyatt (Victoria Park)	

MLA gender (im)balance - current

Party	Men	Women	Total
Labor	25	15	40
Liberal	10	3	13
National	5	1	6
TOTAL	40	19	59

MLA gender (im)balance – replacement of retirees, no seats change

Party	Men	Women	Total
Labor	22	18	40
Liberal	10	3	13
National	5	1	6
TOTAL	37	22	59

MLA gender (im)balance – replacement of retirees, 6% swing to ALP (6 seats change)

Party	Men	Women	Total
Labor	25	21	46
Liberal	7	1	8
National	4	1	5
TOTAL	36	23	59

MLA gender (im)balance – replacement of retirees, 10% swing to ALP (10 seats change)

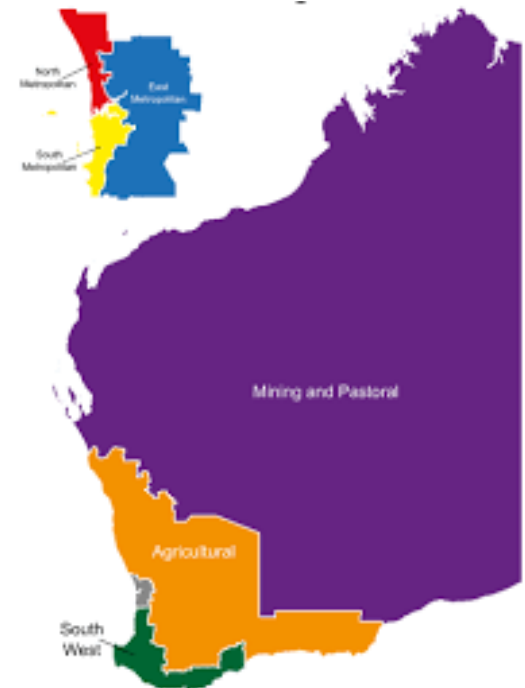
Party	Men	Women	Total
Labor	26	24	50
Liberal	3	1	4
National	4	1	5
TOTAL	33	26	59



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WA election 2021

Martin Drum, Notre Dame University



Fremantle

Broome

Sydney

nd.edu.au



Opposition policy settings

- Transition to renewable energy in power generation
- Significant investment in social housing
- Scrutinising major residential development projects
- PREVENT “TOTAL CONTROL”





Government policy settings

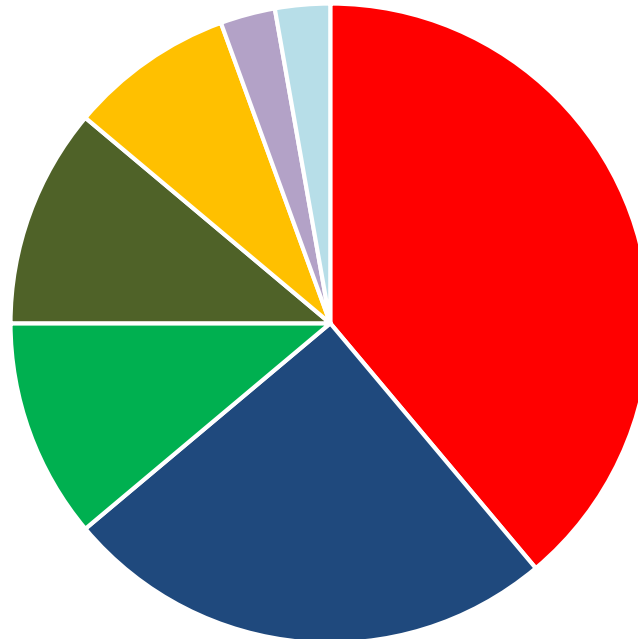
- Keeping WA safe
- War on meth
- Growing a stronger economy
- Embracing residential development projects





Legislative Council – status quo

Membership: 2017-2021



■ Labor ■ Liberal ■ Green ■ National ■ One Nation ■ Shooters ■ Lib Dem



Legislative Council – the challenge of winning a majority

Electorate	WA Labor %	Quota	Labor MLCs elected	% for extra quota	Greens %	Greens quota	Greens MLCs elected
North Metro	37.22	2.61	2	42.86 (3)	9.98	0.70	1
East Metro	46.51	3.26	3	57.14 (4)	8.90	0.62	1
South Metro	44.87	3.14	3	57.14 (4)	9.25	0.65	0
South West	36.44	2.55	2	42.86 (3)	7.58	0.53	1
Agricultural	24.00	1.68	2	42.86 (3)	3.60	0.25	0
Mining and Pastoral	34.16	2.39	2	42.86 (3)	5.68	0.40	1



REPORTING THE 2021 WA ELECTION

OR HOW TO DEAL WITH A 'ROCK STAR' PREMIER

DR KATHRYN SHINE, JOURNALISM DISCIPLINE LEAD, CURTIN UNIVERSITY

ADVERTISING

“

To those of you who are considering voting for my WA Labor team for the very first time this election, my promise is simple:

I will lead a sensible, responsible experienced Government.

We will keep our promises, properly manage the finances, and we'll always stand up for WA.

Together, with your support, we will keep WA strong.

”



WHY TAKE THE
RISK ON
ZAK KIRKUP?



The West Australian

POLITICS > STATE ELECTION 2021



EXCLUSIVE | MOVING ON

McGowan to lose right-hand man after State election

Guy Houston has worked as Mr McGowan's chief of staff for nine years, first in Opposition and then after Labor came to power in 2017.

Peter Law



EXCLUSIVE | 'UN-AUSTRALIAN'

'Disgraceful' fake pamphlet turns WA election dirty

The fight for a Labor-held country electorate has turned dirty, with the distribution of a fake pamphlet suggesting the Liberal challenger has the endorsement of the local shire.

Briana Fiore



STATE ELECTION 2021

McGowan Government accused of overworking health staff

The WA branch of the Australian Nursing Federation has accused the McGowan Government of overworking frontline health workers until they are "burnt out."

Ben O'Shea



PREFERENCE DEMOTION

Sacked One Nation hopeful now last on how-to-vote card

The Liberals have moved a discredited One Nation candidate from third to last place on one of their how-to-vote cards – just one day after he was sacked for repeatedly posting racist comments online.

Charlotte Elton



EXCLUSIVE | SHOCKING VITRIOL

One Nation candidate sacked for racist Facebook posts

Roger Barnett – a One Nation candidate for the WA seat of Forrestfield – was let go after it emerged he repeatedly posted racist comments attacking Aboriginal Australians and Muslims on social media.

Josh Zimmerman



CAMPAIGN TRAIL

McGowan poses with babies as he promises more WA nurses

The first election photos of a politician with a baby have arrived, as Premier Mark McGowan announced a \$36 million expansion of the nursing graduate program if re-elected.

Josh Zimmerman



HOME STRAIGHT

Dawesville will decide the fate of the WA Liberals

If you only get time to tune in for the result of one seat on election night, tune in for Dawesville, because it will tell the story of Saturday's State election, writes Joe Spagnolo.

Joe Spagnolo



NEW DAWN

Anzac services back as McGowan reveals key priorities

Premier Mark McGowan has outlined where his focus will lie if he is re-elected next Saturday – which will include restoring traditional Anzac Day services in WA.

Joe Spagnolo

How 'unremarkable Mark' became WA's rock star Premier

By Hamish Hastie
MARCH 8, 2021



The ABC 23/1/21

"Mark McGowan is on the verge of becoming the most dominant political leader in WA in decades," one Liberal MP conceded.

Both sides of politics believe Mr McGowan's popularity skyrocketed during and after the first wave of COVID-19 in WA, with the Premier winning public applause for his handling of the pandemic.

Polls have backed that up, giving Mr McGowan a previously unheard of tick of approval from around nine out of 10 voters.

Coming up against that was never going to be easy for the Liberals.

But as polling day draws nearer, the risks and consequences are becoming increasingly stark.

Three Liberal seats in firing line

Of the 13 seats the Liberals hold, many within the party are very worried about three — Darling Range, Hillarys and Riverton.

Kalgoorlie is also something of a concern for some Liberals, although most are confident leader Zak Kirkup will hold his seat of Dawesville.

Potential Liberal gains also appear few and far between; insiders say they have some chance of picking up Kingsley, Albany and Murray-Wellington, but few other Labor seats are seen as being seriously in play.

The West Australian 24/2/21

State election 2021 | Labor | Liberal | Perth

State Election 2021: Rookie Labor candidates near unbackable favourites riding wave of McGowan's popularity



Josh Zimmerman | The West Australian
Wed, 24 February 2021 2:00AM | [Comments](#) | [+](#)

[Josh Zimmerman](#)



Labor candidates look likely to win traditional Liberal seats. Pictured - Jags Kirshnan (Riverton), Caitlin Collins (Hillarys), Stuart Aubrey (Scarborough) and Lisa Munday (Dawesville). Credit: Daniel Wilkins/The West Australian



Meet the WA Labor candidates riding the wave of Premier Mark McGowan's unprecedented pandemic popularity all the way into traditional Liberal strongholds.

A GP, a teacher, a paramedic and a fly-in, fly-out sparkie – all installed as near unbackable favourites by bookmakers in electorates that have rarely, if ever, voted red.

Such is the strength of Labor's position on the eve of the March 13 ballot that not even Liberal leader Zak Kirkup – nor his predecessor Liza Harvey – are safe.

The West Australian 15/2/21

State Politics | Zak Kirkup | Perth | State election 2021 | Labor | Mark McGowan | Coronavirus (COVID-19) | Liberal | WA News

EXCLUSIVE

McGowan Government accused by Liberals of shaping COVID-19 policy through public sentiment polling



Peter Law | The West Australian

Mon, 15 February 2021 2:00AM | [Comments](#) | [+](#)

[Peter Law](#)



Premier Mark McGowan has a beer with punters after holding a press conference at Whitfords Brewing Company. Credit: Michael Wilson/The West Australian



Mark McGowan has been accused of basing his response to COVID-19 not on health advice – but polling paid for by the State Government to track public sentiment on everything from the hard border to the AFL grand final.

WA Liberal leader Zak Kirkup said West Australians had been “played for mugs” and claimed the Labor Government exploited the public’s fears about coronavirus.

But the Premier’s office said Mr McGowan was not briefed on the data collected and that all decisions were based on advice from the Chief Health Officer and Police Commissioner.

Renewable Energy | Energy | State election 2021 | Politics

EXCLUSIVE

Zak Kirkup delivers WA Liberal renewable energy plan including target of net zero emissions by 2030



Peter Law | The West Australian
Thu, 11 February 2021 2:00AM | [Comments](#) | [+](#)

[Peter Law](#)



Liberal leader Zak Kirkup likened the 'mega-project' to the North West Shelf oil and gas venture. Credit: Ross Swanborough/The West Australian



All State Government coal-fired power stations will be closed by 2025 as part of an ambitious plan by the WA Liberals to build Australia's biggest renewable energy and export project.

Liberal leader Zak Kirkup likened the "mega-project" to the North West Shelf oil and gas venture, saying it would create the next generation of energy jobs, diversify the economy and deliver cheaper power bills.


Exclusive Politics Federal [WA election](#)


Federal Liberals blast WA Opposition Leader Zak Kirkup's 'lemon' green energy policy



By [Hamish Hastie](#)

February 27, 2021 – 7.17am

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Federal Liberal backbencher Andrew Hastie has labelled his state counterpart's cornerstone green energy election promise a "lemon" in a scathing assessment exposing a deep rift between the two West Australian arms of the party.

The West Australian 24/2/21

State election 2021 | Liberal | Labor | Zak Kirkup | Mark McGowan

EXCLUSIVE

State Election 2021: WA Liberal leader Zak Kirkup concedes he can't win fearing 'landslide' Labor victory



Peter Law | The West Australian

Wed, 24 February 2021 9:00PM | [Comments](#) | [+](#)

[Peter Law](#)



Kirkup: It's not my time, but I'll keep fighting. Credit: Daniel Wilkins/The West Australian



WA Liberal leader Zak Kirkup fears Labor is heading towards an “absolute landslide” State election victory, frankly admitting “it’s not my time, but I’m not going to give up fighting”.

In an unprecedented move by the leader of a major political party, Mr Kirkup said it was time to stop “playing people for fools” and instead be honest about the “impending reality”.

“I accept it’s not my time, but I’m not going to give up fighting,” Mr Kirkup said in an extraordinary interview on the first day of early voting on Wednesday.

ANALYSIS

Why would Zak Kirkup concede defeat just two weeks out from WA's election?

It was an extraordinary and highly risky admission by a party leader just two weeks out from a state election.

WA Liberal leader Zak Kirkup admitted what Liberals have been privately saying for months, that Labor is on track to win the election comfortably.

"I have to be real with the people of Western Australia, and they are telling me that they expect Mark McGowan will still be Premier," Mr Kirkup said.

"That doesn't mean we stop fighting, that doesn't mean we stop working to get as many Liberals over the line as possible," he said.

While it comes as no surprise that Labor is on track to win, it is an unprecedented move for a party leader to make the admission while campaigning is still underway.

ABC and WAtoday

WA Election: AMA says WA's health system is heading towards crisis point

Politics WA WA election

Labor's \$1b of election promises could push out infrastructure project timeframes



By [Peter de Kruijff](#)

February 17, 2021 – 2.34pm

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A A A

Labor's election promises will add \$1 billion to Western Australia's net debt over the next four years, according to costings released on Wednesday by Treasury.

Under Treasurer Michael Barnes warned adding projects to the state's infrastructure schedule could lead to time blow-outs.

The West Australian 2/3/21

State election 2021 | Labor | Coronavirus (COVID-19) | WA News | Liberal | State Politics | Mark McGowan | Zak Kirkup

State Election 2021: Zak Kirkup blasts Mark McGowan's post-pandemic border plan as 'immense overreach'

Josh Zimmerman and Peter Law | The West Australian
Tue, 2 March 2021 1:10PM | [Comments](#) | [+](#)



 Continuing to force every person travelling to WA from interstate to disclose their personal details to police post-pandemic would be "immense overreach", according to Zak Kirkup. Credit: Simon Santi/The West Australian



Continuing to force every person travelling to WA from interstate to disclose their personal details to police post-pandemic would be "immense overreach", according to Zak Kirkup.

The WA Liberal leader slammed Premier Mark McGowan's suggestion the G2G pass system - implemented in response to COVID-19 - may become permanent and that searching all land arrivals for drugs was a "very reasonable thing".

"The Liberal Party fully supports (hard) borders to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic but suggesting that we're going to go further than that and somehow treat every Australian who might be visiting our State as a potential meth trafficker I think is immense overreach," Mr Kirkup said.

ANALYSIS

As the WA election looms, will Mark McGowan's border backtrack dent his popularity?

Backflip after criticism

Hours later, [the Premier emphatically backtracked](#).

"When we talk about extending the system, it's about extending the checks at the border," Mr McGowan said.

"The G2G pass, once the pandemic is over, we don't intend to extend its use."

Keep in mind, just hours earlier Mr McGowan had repeatedly refused to rule that out.

And in the immediate aftermath, government spin doctors were confirming that continuing the G2G pass was an option being discussed — removing any doubt that the Premier had been misinterpreted.

Your guide to the WA election 2021 major promises



Labor, The Liberals, The Greens and The Nationals have all made big-ticket pledges to win your votes.

Politics WA [Political donations](#)

McGowan's 'gold standard' of transparency lacking with \$3 million of 'dark money' received by Labor



By [Peter de Kruijff](#)

January 19, 2021 – 6.03am

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Millions of dollars of 'dark money' is continuing to pour into Western Australia's political parties after the McGowan government failed to pass promised reforms in its first term.

The four biggest political parties in WA drew \$9.59 million of income in 2019-20 but only publicly disclosed where 24 per cent of the money had come from as part of the annual returns process.

OPINION

As WA Liberals sandbag their strongholds, Mark McGowan gathers powerful friends



Gareth Parker
Columnist

It's not yet on the radar of most voters, but WA Labor's closeness to a certain circle in the business community is an increasingly hot topic among the political junkie class.

The words "WA Inc" are murmured, and not just by conservatives, though the comparison is not at all proportionate with the excessive and appalling realities of the Burke-Dowding era – with its envelopes of cash donated to the premier and lavish taxpayer bailouts of Connell and the mates' crooked and failing enterprises.

But the McGowan government is racking up a tally of deals that favour businesspeople who have donated, provided vocal support, or both, and it is beginning to create the impression there is good fishing to be done if you know where they're biting.

Looming election wipe-out the final turn in WA Liberals' long downwards spiral



By [Gareth Parker](#)

March 10, 2021 – 6.43am

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How did it come to this for the WA Liberals?

First thing's first, it's not neophyte WA opposition leader Zak Kirkup's fault, or at least not mostly.

His decision to run up the white flag conceding he wouldn't win Saturday's state election more than two-and-a-half weeks before polling day caught national headlines, but it is the end of the story, not the beginning; the patient's terminal symptom rather than its underlying pathology.

In truth there has been a steady degradation of the party's grassroots that stretches back more than a decade.

That degradation has been masked by a once dominant state leader, a fundraising mirage that was more due to Federal Labor than the WA Liberals, and the passing of a dominant generation of federal MPs who have punched above their weight at the national level.

The West Australian 11/3/21

State election 2021 | Liberal | Zak Kirkup | Perth | WA News

State election 2021: Voters left in the dark after train wreck Liberal costings reveal



Josh Zimmerman | The West Australian
Thu, 11 March 2021 7:24PM | [Comments](#) | +

[Josh Zimmerman](#)



Opposition leader Zak Kirkup. Credit: Trevor Collens/The West Australian



For the past two weeks Zak Kirkup has made clear his belief this election is about little more than saving the remaining furniture for the Liberals. Today, they set it on fire.

The West Australian



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WEEKLY TIPPING GUIDE

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If it's THIS bad for Kirkup what happens to rest of Libs?

ZAK'S ALL FOLKS

PETER LAW & JOSH ZIMMERMAN

Zak Kirkup is set to be the first WA Liberal leader in a century to lose his seat, according to a poll showing Labor's candidate on track to pick up 60 per cent of the vote. If the swing is replicated Statewide, the Libs will win just three seats tomorrow.

SPECIAL ELECTION REPORTS PAGES 4-7