

Peter van Onselen: political scientist or quack?

Rudd cannot win seats in Queensland

“The conventional wisdom among Rudd's backers is that he has a better chance of wresting back seats from the Coalition in Queensland. Labor holds only six of 28 House of Representatives seats in Queensland. The problem with this theory is that much of the Queensland Labor Party organisation doesn't support Rudd ... If Rudd can't persuade large sections of his party in his home state to support him, what makes him think he will be able to persuade the wider Queensland community?”

However, Labor's most important state at the next election won't be Queensland. It will be Western Australia, (Kim) Beazley's home state. At the 2004 election, Mark Latham lost two seats there (Hasluck and Stirling) and almost lost two more (Swan and Cowan).”

(4 December 2006, Sydney Morning Herald)

(Rudd achieved a swing of more than 8% in Queensland and picked up 15 additional seats.)

Rudd

“Rudd's track record in prosecuting the case against the Government over AWB indicates he may not have the political skills to defeat Howard at an election.”

(4 December 2006, Sydney Morning Herald)

Got that one badly wrong

Bennelong

“High-profile candidates cause a media storm and McKew has certainly done that. However, once the storm dies down and the numbers are crunched in Bennelong, she is unlikely to win the seat.”

(1 March 2007, Online Opinion)

Wrong again

Interest rates

“The election-year economy is unlikely to provide any upset with a happy medium likely between sluggish growth and the rapid clip that would force another interest rate rise. The new Reserve Bank governor, Glenn Stevens, is unlikely to become the first occupant of his position to raise rates in the run-up to a federal election.”

(Errington & van Onselen, 17 January 2007, Online Opinion)

Stephens raised interest rates during the campaign

Rudd

“Rudd's greatest weakness could be his style. His bookish looks reflect his significant intelligence, but he has to appeal to the average voter. His working-class background does not come across in his media performances.”

(6 December 2006, Online Opinion)

Rudd gained most votes among working class voters

Newspolls

“So assuming Newspoll is anywhere near accurate, there is a lot to be said for a good result for the Coalition next week in terms of believing they can do something in the last two weeks that mirrors 1993 in reverse.”

(9 November 2007, Lateline)

Wrong

WA State Election

"But the Labor Party are favourites and I suspect they'll probably scrape home by less than a handful of seats."

(2 September 2008, Lateline)

Labor lost the election

"The Liberal Party know that their best effort to get back into government is to focus on Colin Barnett, a cleanskin."

(3 September 2008, 7.30 Report)

Cleanskin? Barnett was Deputy Opposition Leader in 1992, a high profile Minister for years, and Leader of the Opposition from 2001-2005

Queensland State Election

"Internal Labor polling has the Liberal National Party on course for an upset victory in Saturday's Queensland election. The Australian understands the track polling - the nightly results of small sample sizes spread across key electorates - has revealed swings of as much as 8 to 10 per cent in electorates held by 6 to 8 per cent.

...

Labor's decision to go to the polls early followed a similar early election in Western Australia last year. Voters there greeted the early election with some cynicism and Alan Carpenter's Labor government lost by the narrowest of margins. The internal Labor polling in Queensland indicates a similar result may be in the offing."

(19 March 2009, The Australian)

Labor won easily

Wentworth preselection

"Now that the opportunity to sign up new members for the Wentworth Liberal Party preselection has come and gone, many are asking how the little-known Peter King appears to have outdone the high-profile Malcolm Turnbull in the Wentworth membership drive. As the sitting member, King has the enormous advantage of being able to trawl the Liberal Party's electoral database, Feedback, for the details of voters in his seat likely to be sympathetic to him."

(Wayne Errington and Peter van Onselen, 21 October 2003, Sydney Morning Herald)

Turnbull ousted King

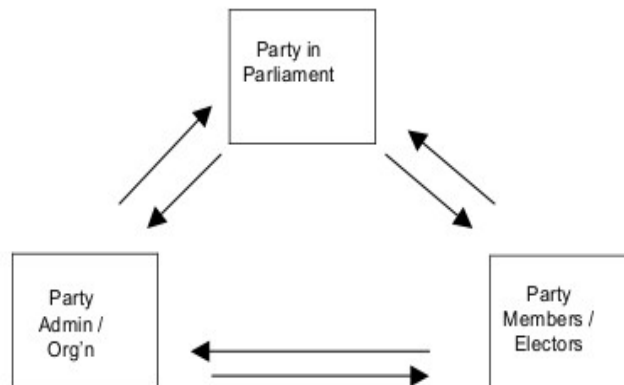
"I remember thinking at the time [of the Turnbull recruiting campaign that] I was more important than I was."

(28 July 2007, Sydney Morning Herald)

Seems he did not remember that lesson.

Research into the structure of political parties

Figure A: Three sections of party in Australia



“Figure A assists in understanding the complex relationships and interdependence between sections of Australian political parties, particularly major parties.”

(Research paper, October 2004, Major Party Senators: campaigns, organisation and resource disposal)

This looks like a diagram from a year 5 school project and makes the ridiculous claim it helps to understand complex relationships.

Conclusions of research into role of Senators

“This paper has identified the role performed by major party Senators during election campaigns, and the relationship of Senators to the party organisation and the local candidate.

...

Senators have therefore been shown to play an important role in campaigning on a number of levels. First, they serve a vital facilitating role. Secondly, they are able to help muster support at both central and local levels.”

(Research paper, October 2004, Major Party Senators: campaigns, organisation and resource disposal)

Incredible insights! Year 10 project at best.

Research into the advantages of incumbency

“Broadly, there are two forms of incumbency advantage in politics: macro and micro. This paper is concerned with macro incumbency advantage. The macro level is that of government. A party with a majority in the House of Representatives has access to the advantages that being the government of the day affords.

Such advantages include Departments, ministerial staff, government advertising, and setting policy. Micro incumbency advantage is assessed at the electoral district level. That is, the incumbency advantages a sitting MP has over a non-incumbent candidate.”

(Research paper, 2006, The Howard Government's Industrial Relations Information Campaign and the Limits to Incumbency Advantage)

More incredible insights! More like a Year 10 project