



## Electoral pendulum 2007

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### Executive summary

- Since the 2004 election there have been electoral boundary redistributions in the Australian Capital Territory (2005), New South Wales (2006) and Queensland (2006).
- The 2004 election results have been transposed onto the new boundaries and a revised electoral pendulum showing margins (swings) needed to lose each division at the next election has been produced (see Appendix).
- Notionally, there has been no change in the party representation from the 2004 election outcome due to the 2005 and 2006 redistributions. However, it could be argued that the new division of Calare is notionally a Coalition rather than Independent division.

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## Introduction

This Research Paper shows the notional two-party preferred swing needed for each electoral division (seat) to change hands at the next House of Representatives election. The two-party preferred votes are the results of the 2004 election adjusted for the effects of electoral redistributions which occurred in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) during 2005, and New South Wales (NSW) and Queensland during 2006.

The redistribution in the ACT was triggered by the passage of time—a redistribution must be held in each state and territory at least every seven years. There was no change in the number of divisions resulting from this redistribution.

The NSW and Queensland redistributions were triggered by a change in the two States' entitlements to representation in the House of Representatives in the 2005 determination by the Australian Electoral Commissioner. The redistributions resulted in the creation of a new division, Flynn, in Queensland and the abolition of Gwydir in NSW.

## Divisions to win after outcome of redistributions

The 2005 redistribution in the ACT did not change the notional party status of either of the two divisions. Both the divisions of Canberra and Fraser remain Australian Labor Party divisions. Canberra notionally increased its two-party preferred margin by 0.3 per cent to 9.9 per cent and is now very close to being classified as a safe seat.<sup>1</sup> Fraser's margin remained steady at 13.3 per cent.

The 2006 redistributions resulted in NSW losing a seat<sup>2</sup>—the northern, rural seat of Gwydir safely held by the Coalition—reducing its entitlement to 49 divisions, while Queensland increased its entitlement to 29 seats with the creation of Flynn in central Queensland.<sup>3</sup> The rural division of Flynn is notionally a fairly-safe Coalition seat with a margin of 7.7 per cent.

Only two seats changed their notional party status because of the redistributions; both in NSW. The inner metropolitan Sydney seat of Parramatta changed from a marginal Labor seat to a marginal Coalition seat, while the outer metropolitan seat of Macquarie changed from a fairly-safe Coalition seat to a marginal Labor seat.

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1. A 'marginal' seat (electoral division) has a two-party preferred margin of less than 6 per cent; 'fairly safe' is 6 per cent to 10 per cent; and a 'safe' seat above 10 per cent. [http://www.aec.gov.au/About\\_AEC/Publications/Newsfiles/2005/No\\_124.htm#20%20most%20marginal](http://www.aec.gov.au/About_AEC/Publications/Newsfiles/2005/No_124.htm#20%20most%20marginal), accessed 28 August 2007.
  2. For further discussion regarding this, see Scott Bennett, *'Save Country Seats': the NSW redistribution 2005-06*, Research Brief No. 8 2006–07, accessed 28 August 2007.
  3. Named in honour of the Reverend John Flynn, founder of the Royal Flying Doctor Service, Flynn stretches in a westward band from the port of Gladstone to Winton.

The above outcomes result in a notional composition of the House of Representatives before the next election of 87 Coalition members, 60 Labor and 3 Independents for a total of 150 members: unchanged from the actual position after the 2004 election. This gives the Coalition a majority of 24 seats in the lower house. The Coalition would lose its absolute majority if (net) 12 seats were lost at the next election. However, because of the three Independent members, Labor would need to win an additional (net) 16 seats to be able to form government in its own right.

## Independent seats

A further issue to consider is the situation in the independently held divisions of Calare and New England in NSW and Kennedy in Queensland. The 2006 redistributions did not result in any significant changes to the electoral boundaries in either New England or Kennedy,<sup>4</sup> therefore, the current members who enjoy large margins could reasonably be expected to retain their seats.<sup>5</sup>

Calare, however, was substantially redrawn: 45 per cent of its voters were transferred to the seat of Macquarie. In addition, its area was increased from 21 621 to 237 325 square kilometres by taking in a large part of 'old' Parkes to the Queensland border.

With the independent member for Calare, Peter Andren, announcing in March 2007 that he was not standing for the seat at the next election:

the effective abolition of the seat of Calare with its splitting into two ... made that decision easier;<sup>6</sup>

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4. New England lost no voters to other divisions and gained a small number of voters from the abolished Gwydir. These new voters amount to only about four per cent of the total voters of the new electorate. Kennedy lost a small number of voters to Herbert and gained an even smaller number of voters from Leichhardt, resulting in over 98 per cent of the voters in the new division being from the old one. Sources: AEC, [Redistribution of New South Wales into 49 electoral divisions, 2006](#) and AEC, [Redistribution of Queensland into 29 electoral divisions, 2006](#), accessed 28 August 2007.
  5. At the 2004 election, Tony Windsor, member for New England had a two-candidate preferred margin of 21.00 per cent, while Bob Katter, member for Kennedy, had a two-candidate preferred margin of 18.88 per cent. Two-candidate preferred estimates made by the AEC after the redistributions now show Tony Windsor's margin at 21.38 per cent and Bob Katter's margin at 18.83 per cent. Source: AEC, [National Seat Status—including notional seat status for the Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales and Queensland, Electoral Newsfile No. 131 July 2007](#), accessed 28 August 2007.
  6. Peter Andren MP, [Andren bid for Senate](#), Media Release, 29 March 2007 accessed 28 August 2007.

it is feasible to suggest that Calare is now notionally a Coalition seat—on a two-party preferred basis, Calare is a safe Coalition seat with a margin of 11.1 per cent.

Under this assumption, the notional composition of the House of Representatives leading into the next election is 88 Coalition members, 60 Labor and 2 Independents. This means the Coalition would need to lose (net) 13 seats to lose its absolute majority at the next election. The Labor party still needs to win an additional (net) 16 seats to be able to win government.

## Pendulum

The Appendix gives a table (commonly known as a pendulum) of the two-party preferred margin (or swing) required to lose each seat at the next election.<sup>7</sup> The seats are grouped in LP/NP (Coalition), ALP (Labor) and Independent seats. Within the party groupings, the seats are ranked from highest to lowest margin.

Based on the pendulum the ALP requires a ‘uniform’ two-party preferred swing of just over 4.8 per cent to gain the necessary 16 seats to win government at the next election.

However, it is worth remembering that the pendulum is not always an accurate predictor of which seats may be lost and won because election swings are not necessarily uniform across Australia, between States or even between regions. For example, at the 2004 election the national two-party preferred swing was 1.8 per cent to the Coalition. However, the swing in NSW was only 0.3 per cent to the Coalition while in Western Australia it was 3.8 per cent.

## Conclusion

The 2005 and 2006 redistributions in the ACT, NSW and Queensland have maintained a House of Representatives of 150 seats for the next election, although NSW lost a seat and Queensland gained one.

The reworking of the 2004 election results onto the new electorate boundaries, however, has not resulted in a notional composition change between the parties in the House of Representatives since the 2004 election; although, the major redrawing of the boundaries of Calare may notionally have resulted in an additional seat for the Coalition.

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7. The margins shown in the pendulum are as estimated by the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC). Individual margins may vary very slightly from the Parliamentary Library’s estimated pendulum provided to Senators and Members on the Library’s intranet from late last year. The AEC’s margins are shown because they will be used to calculate the swings at the next election. Source: AEC, [\*National Seat Status—including notional seat status for the Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales and Queensland\*](#), Electoral Newsfile No. 131 July 2007, accessed 28 August 2007.

## Appendix

## House of Representatives, electoral pendulum (a)

## 2004 vote on 2006 boundaries (b)

Per cent

| Division           | Margin | Division             | Margin | Division              | Margin | Division         | Margin |
|--------------------|--------|----------------------|--------|-----------------------|--------|------------------|--------|
| <i>LP/NP Seats</i> |        | <i>LP/NP Seats</i>   |        | <i>ALP Seats</i>      |        | <i>ALP Seats</i> |        |
| Mallee (Vic)       | 24.75  | Higgins (Vic)        | 8.76   | Batman (Vic)          | 21.32  | Ballarat (Vic)   | 2.23   |
| Murray (Vic)       | 24.08  | Hughes (NSW)         | 8.55   | Grayndler (NSW)       | 21.19  | Holt (Vic)       | 1.51   |
| Maranoa (Qld)      | 21.05  | Hinkler (Qld)        | 8.34   | Melbourne (Vic)       | 21.14  | Isaacs (Vic)     | 1.48   |
| Riverina (NSW)     | 20.85  | Flynn (Qld)          | 7.72   | Sydney (NSW)          | 17.38  | Richmond (NSW)   | 1.44   |
| Mitchell (NSW)     | 20.68  | Gippsland (Vic)      | 7.70   | Wills (Vic)           | 16.90  | Adelaide (SA)    | 1.33   |
| O'Connor (WA)      | 20.39  | Petrie (Qld)         | 7.45   | Blaxland (NSW)        | 15.23  | Bendigo (Vic)    | 0.96   |
| Barker (SA)        | 19.88  | Robertson (NSW)      | 6.87   | Gellibrand (Vic)      | 14.95  | Cowan (WA)       | 0.78   |
| Moncrieff (Qld)    | 19.53  | Sturt (SA)           | 6.80   | Gorton (Vic)          | 14.90  | Macquarie (NSW)  | 0.47   |
| Groom (Qld)        | 18.81  | Longman (Qld)        | 6.75   | Scullin (Vic)         | 14.79  | Swan (WA)        | 0.08   |
| Parke (NSW)        | 17.56  | Cowper (NSW)         | 6.75   | Watson (NSW)          | 14.56  | Hindmarsh (SA)   | 0.06   |
| Bradfield (NSW)    | 17.55  | McEwen (Vic)         | 6.42   | Throsby (NSW)         | 13.82  |                  |        |
| Farrer (NSW)       | 16.63  | Paterson (NSW)       | 6.32   | Fraser (ACT)          | 13.32  |                  |        |
| Indi (Vic)         | 16.29  | Kalgoorlie (WA)      | 6.30   | Fowler (NSW)          | 13.32  |                  |        |
| Fadden (Qld)       | 15.90  | Herbert (Qld)        | 6.24   | Denison (Tas)         | 13.29  |                  |        |
| Mackellar (NSW)    | 15.46  | La Trobe (Vic)       | 5.83   | Port Adelaide (SA)    | 12.91  |                  |        |
| Curtin (WA)        | 14.62  | Blair (Qld)          | 5.69   | Reid (NSW)            | 12.08  |                  |        |
| McPherson (Qld)    | 13.94  | Page (NSW)           | 5.46   | Chifley (NSW)         | 11.97  |                  |        |
| Grey (SA)          | 13.82  | Boothby (SA)         | 5.37   | Cunningham (NSW)      | 11.62  |                  |        |
| Berowra (NSW)      | 13.82  | Corangamite (Vic)    | 5.32   | Hunter (NSW)          | 11.09  |                  |        |
| Mayo (SA)          | 13.59  | McMillan (Vic)       | 4.99   | Canberra (ACT)        | 9.91   |                  |        |
| Lyne (NSW)         | 13.41  | Deakin (Vic)         | 4.97   | Maribymong (Vic)      | 9.47   |                  |        |
| Cook (NSW)         | 13.28  | Dobell (NSW)         | 4.84   | Shortland (NSW)       | 9.24   |                  |        |
| Aston (Vic)        | 13.15  | Bennelong (NSW)      | 4.13   | Newcastle (NSW)       | 9.09   |                  |        |
| Pearce (WA)        | 12.94  | Eden-Monaro (NSW)    | 3.27   | Lalor (Vic)           | 8.79   |                  |        |
| Hume (NSW)         | 12.84  | Lindsay (NSW)        | 2.92   | Kingsford Smith (NSW) | 8.73   |                  |        |
| Fairfax (Qld)      | 12.41  | Moreton (Qld)        | 2.83   | Griffith (Qld)        | 8.48   |                  |        |
| Wannon (Vic)       | 12.37  | Solomon (NT)         | 2.81   | Charlton (NSW)        | 8.40   |                  |        |
| Wide Bay (Qld)     | 12.21  | Bass (Tas)           | 2.63   | Calwell (Vic)         | 8.19   |                  |        |
| Tangney (WA)       | 11.75  | Wentworth (NSW)      | 2.51   | Fremantle (WA)        | 7.76   |                  |        |
| Forde (Qld)        | 11.52  | Stirling (WA)        | 2.04   | Lingiari (NT)         | 7.66   |                  |        |
| Greenway (NSW)     | 11.35  | Hasluck (WA)         | 1.82   | Franklin (Tas)        | 7.59   |                  |        |
| Casey (Vic)        | 11.35  | Braddon (Tas)        | 1.13   | Barton (NSW)          | 7.57   |                  |        |
| Warringah (NSW)    | 11.29  | Makin (SA)           | 0.93   | Hotham (Vic)          | 7.40   |                  |        |
| Macarthur (NSW)    | 11.15  | Parramatta (NSW)     | 0.83   | Oxley (Qld)           | 7.12   |                  |        |
| Flinders (Vic)     | 11.11  | Wakefield (SA)       | 0.67   | Werriwa (NSW)         | 6.94   |                  |        |
| Fisher (Qld)       | 10.98  | Bonner (Qld)         | 0.51   | Perth (WA)            | 6.73   |                  |        |
| Moore (WA)         | 10.83  | Kingston (SA)        | 0.07   | Prospect (NSW)        | 6.40   |                  |        |
| Menzies (Vic)      | 10.67  |                      |        | Corio (Vic)           | 5.64   |                  |        |
| Forrest (WA)       | 10.45  |                      |        | Lilley (Qld)          | 5.40   |                  |        |
| Ryan (Qld)         | 10.42  |                      |        | Brand (WA)            | 4.65   |                  |        |
| Leichhardt (Qld)   | 10.26  |                      |        | Jagajaga (Vic)        | 4.40   |                  |        |
| North Sydney (NSW) | 10.04  |                      |        | Capricornia (Qld)     | 4.01   |                  |        |
| Goldstein (Vic)    | 10.03  |                      |        | Brisbane (Qld)        | 3.94   |                  |        |
| Dawson (Qld)       | 9.99   |                      |        | Melbourne Ports (Vic) | 3.74   |                  |        |
| Kooyong (Vic)      | 9.58   |                      |        | Lyons (Tas)           | 3.68   |                  |        |
| Canning (WA)       | 9.54   |                      |        | Bruce (Vic)           | 3.48   |                  |        |
| Gilmore (NSW)      | 9.41   | <i>IND Seats (c)</i> |        | Banks (NSW)           | 3.22   |                  |        |
| Dunkley (Vic)      | 9.38   | New England (NSW)    | 13.59  | Lowe (NSW)            | 3.03   |                  |        |
| Bowman (Qld)       | 8.90   | Calare (NSW)         | 11.41  | Rankin (Qld)          | 2.98   |                  |        |
| Dickson (Qld)      | 8.89   | Kennedy (Qld)        | 8.86   | Chisholm (Vic)        | 2.65   |                  |        |

Note: the Independent held divisions are all notionally LP/NP with two-party preferred margins as shown.

(a) Notional two-party preferred swing required for division to change at the next election.

(b) Redistributions: final boundaries for ACT, NSW and Queensland.

(c) On a two-candidate preferred (TCP) basis, the notional margins of the Independents in New England and Kennedy are 21.38 and 18.83 per cent respectively; however, the large changes to Calare's electoral boundaries make the calculation of a TCP margin problematical, especially since the Independent member will not be standing at the next election.

Source: AEC, *National Seat Status - including notional seat status for the Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales and Queensland*, Electoral Newsfile No. 131 July 2007.

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