



Libs Like Labor As Far As Eye Can See

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At the beginning of every election campaign every politician proclaims “this is the most important election in our lifetime and the future of the country is at stake”.

At one level that’s certainly true – elections are important, especially when governments change. But whether election outcomes are quite as significant as is sometimes made out is debatable.

If Bill Shorten had won the 2019 federal election while taxes would have gone up, in all likelihood he would have attempted to manage COVID-19 in much the same way as has Scott Morrison.

For all the fuss about it, maybe the result of next year’s election won’t end up being that important.



The Coalition has adopted Labor's signature climate change policy, and it seems Labor will agree to what the Coalition now treats as its highest legislative priority, namely [reform to religious discrimination laws](#).

The plebiscite to change the definition of marriage was held four years ago, Israel Folau was sacked 2½ years ago, but with an election just months away the government said this week the laws were urgent and a priority.

Labor supports the Coalition's "stage three" tax cuts, which don't take effect for another three years anyway, while the Coalition, notwithstanding the brave attempts of one or two backbenchers, didn't attempt to reverse the increase in the superannuation guarantee.

For as far as the eye can see there are no proposals for productivity-enhancing policy reform from either of the major parties.

The Coalition's [most recent policy initiative](#) to force social media companies to reveal the names of those who use online platforms is the product of the hurt feelings of a few politicians.

If the policy is ever implemented, it will further entrench into Australian politics the notion that for every problem the solution is more government regulation.

It's a shame Coalition ministers don't spend one-10th of the time they devote to complaining about social media companies to instead making the case for industrial relations reform or cutting red tape.

For all the talk of how afraid the Prime Minister is of the Labor state premiers, the Opposition Leader is no less frightened.

As state governments have launched the most savage assault on the civil liberties of Australians in the country's peacetime history, both Morrison and Anthony Albanese have stayed mute.

Even after the last-minute minor amendments made this week to Victoria's new pandemic management laws, Australian citizens living in the state who have broken no law can be arrested by a directive of a public servant and detained indefinitely.

A detained person is not guaranteed access to a lawyer as it is for a public servant to decide whether a request for access to legal advice is "reasonable".

Whether Morrison or Albanese support such a law is unknown. Maybe they are simply unaware of it.



Neither the Coalition nor Labor will dare offer at the next election policies that would allow the Australian public to decide for themselves, for example, whether levels of immigration should be higher or lower or if Australia should have electricity generated by nuclear power.

The debate between the two major parties about a national integrity commission is a third-order issue that's an obsession of lawyers and former judges who simply want to usurp the powers of elected representatives.

The only surprise in the most recent Resolve polls for the Nine newspapers is that the vote for the parties that aren't either the Coalition or Labor is at 27 per cent and not higher.

The challenge to the Coalition at next year's election is no less from the right than from the "independent local voices" on the left.

Those tempted to vote for one of the minor parties of the right might be aware of the risk that to do so increases the chance of a Labor election victory.

But with the ALP doing its best to appear as non-threatening as possible, and with the Coalition being in many ways indistinguishable from Labor anyway, it's a risk some might take.

At the 2019 election the difference between the Coalition and the Labor Party was clear and easily understood. What the difference will be in 2022 is less easy to discern.

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