

Shock poll result shows Mike Baird is far from invincible

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Mike Baird is under no illusion that, after almost six years, some of the gloss has started to come off the NSW Coalition government.



Mike Baird's bubble bursts, poll reveals

After almost six years, the gloss has started to come off Baird's Coalition government.

It's an inevitability that governments eventually have to make difficult decisions, which is why they tend to make them early in the election cycle.

Each tough decision risks upsetting another section of the community, so losing a bit of support is to be expected.

Even so, the ReachTEL poll result will come as something of a shock to Baird and his colleagues.

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They emerged from the 2015 election victorious and with a plan to reap billions of dollars from asset sales to bankroll a major infrastructure program.

What better way to maintain voter support for the next few years than to build the roads, railways, schools and hospitals they have been crying out for?

That program is well underway but events, as the saying goes, have intervened.



Magic wearing off: NSW premier Mike Baird. Photo: Peter Rae

Most alarming for the government will be that a slight majority of voters say they think Luke Foley would make a better Premier.

The Coalition's dominance to date is underpinned by two factors: Baird's popularity and Foley's failure to "cut through" to voters.



Illustration: Cathy Wilcox

It's why there has been such nervousness about who will lead the government if Baird decides to leave politics after the 2019 election (or even before given unforeseen circumstances).

This result suggests that either voters are warming to Foley or simply have turned off Baird so much that whoever is the alternative is more palatable.

Either way, government MPs will be hoping it is an aberration reflecting the difficult decisions being made in recent months.

For Foley, it is a big boost to his standing within his own caucus. It will give the opposition hope that "Magic Mike" Baird is far from invincible come 2019.

<http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/shock-poll-result-shows-mike-baird-is-far-from-invincible-20160826-gr2236.html>