

Mike Baird slumps to lowest rating as Coalition clings to its lead

The Australian 8 December 2016

Kylar Loussikian

Mike Baird's satisfaction rating has slumped to his lowest on record, despite the government reversing course on a number of key policies including the controversial greyhound racing ban.



Mike Baird. Picture: The Manly Daily.

A Newspann, taken exclusively for *The Australian*, shows just 35 per cent of voters are satisfied with the NSW Premier's performance, a fall of four percentage points since September and a dramatic decline from a year ago when he commanded 61 per cent satisfaction.

The Coalition is still in a narrow election-winning position, with the two-party-preferred vote unchanged since September at 51 per cent to 49 per cent, a 3.3 per cent swing since last year's election.

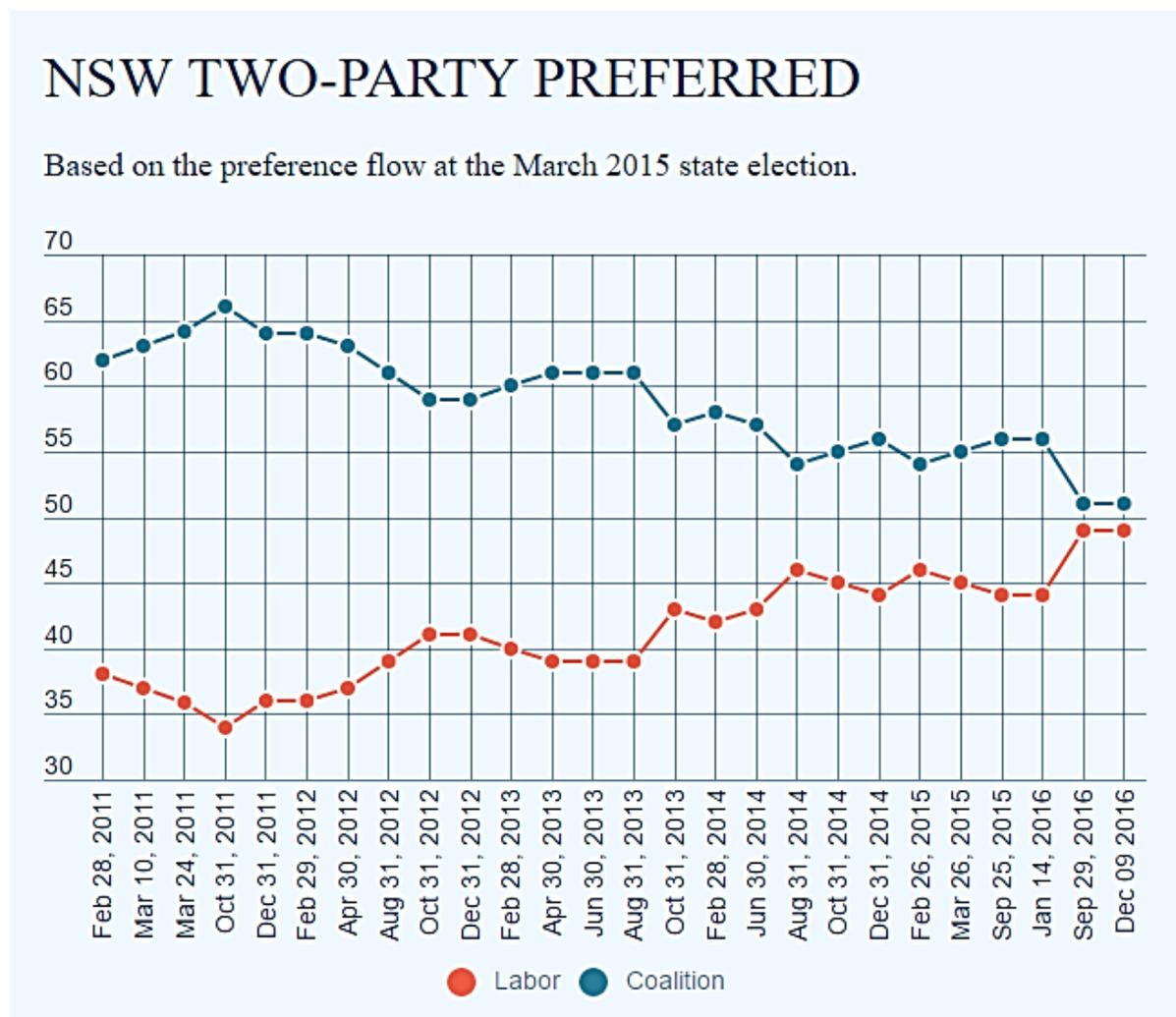
A uniform swing of that magnitude across the state in the next election, due in 2019, would see Labor win six seats from the Coalition but Mr Baird would be returned with a comfortable majority.

Despite the fall in Mr Baird’s satisfaction rating, voters continue to regard him as an overwhelmingly better choice as premier, 43 per cent to Luke Foley’s 26 per cent, although almost a third of respondents remain uncommitted.

Newspoll shows the Opposition Leader’s satisfaction rising two points to 34 per cent since September, but dissatisfaction with his performance has also increased to 40 per cent.

- [MORE: Baird dogged by falling numbers](#)

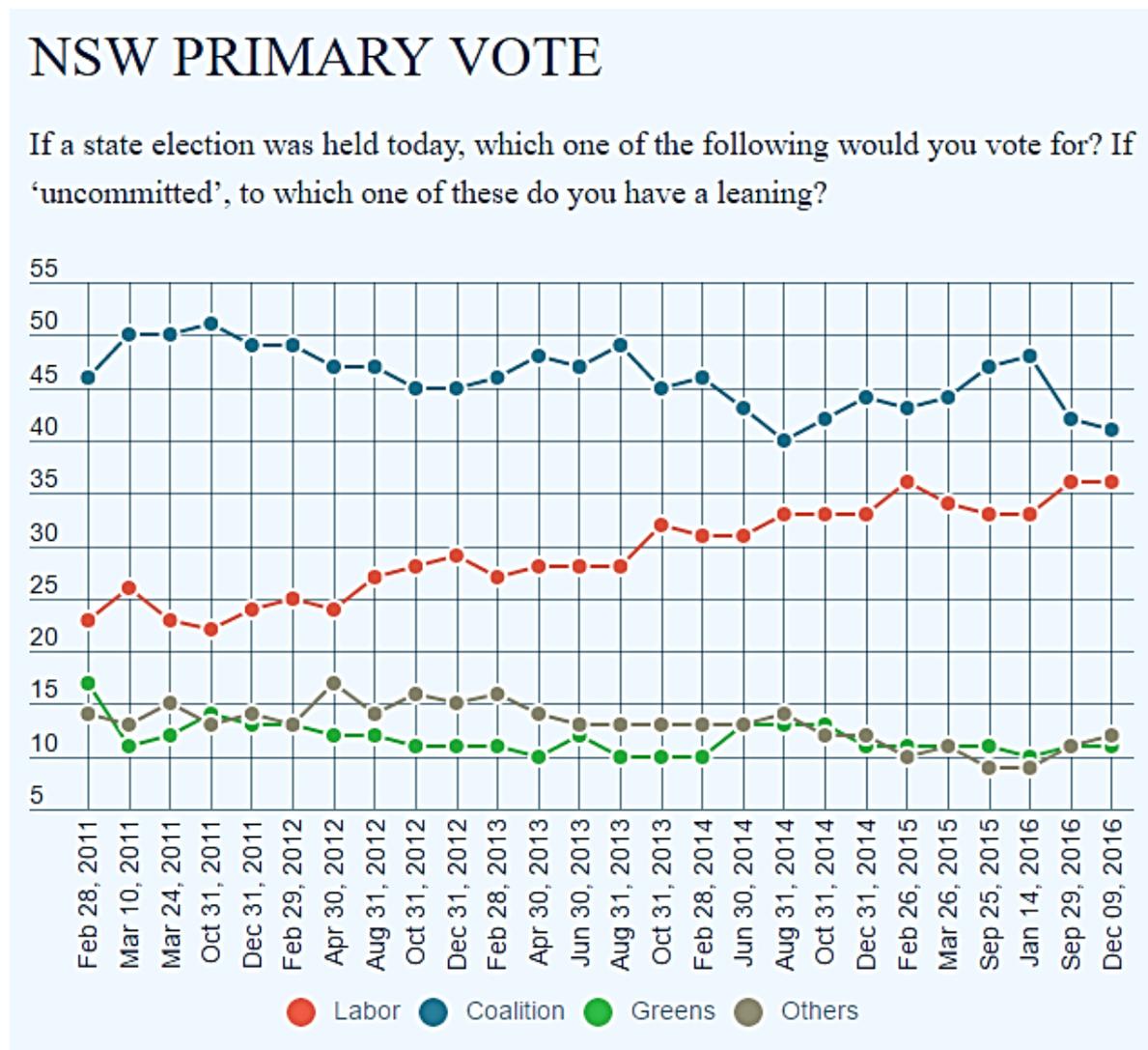
Labor’s primary vote remains at 36 per cent, a 2.1-point increase since the last state election, while the Coalition’s has edged down from 42 per cent in September to 41 per cent, compared with 45.6 per cent in March 2015.



One Nation and the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers will likely be buoyed by the continued rise in the primary vote for non-major parties, which lifted from 10 per cent at the last election to 12 per cent in December, the poll of 1567 voters shows.

The result comes a month after the Shooters won their first lower house seat with an unprecedented swing against the Nationals in the Orange by-election, a

result that brought to an end Police Minister Troy Grant’s leadership of the party.



His successor, Skills Minister John Barilaro, who is now Deputy Premier, has increased speculation about the future of a number of key ministers as Mr Baird prepares for a cabinet reshuffle in January.

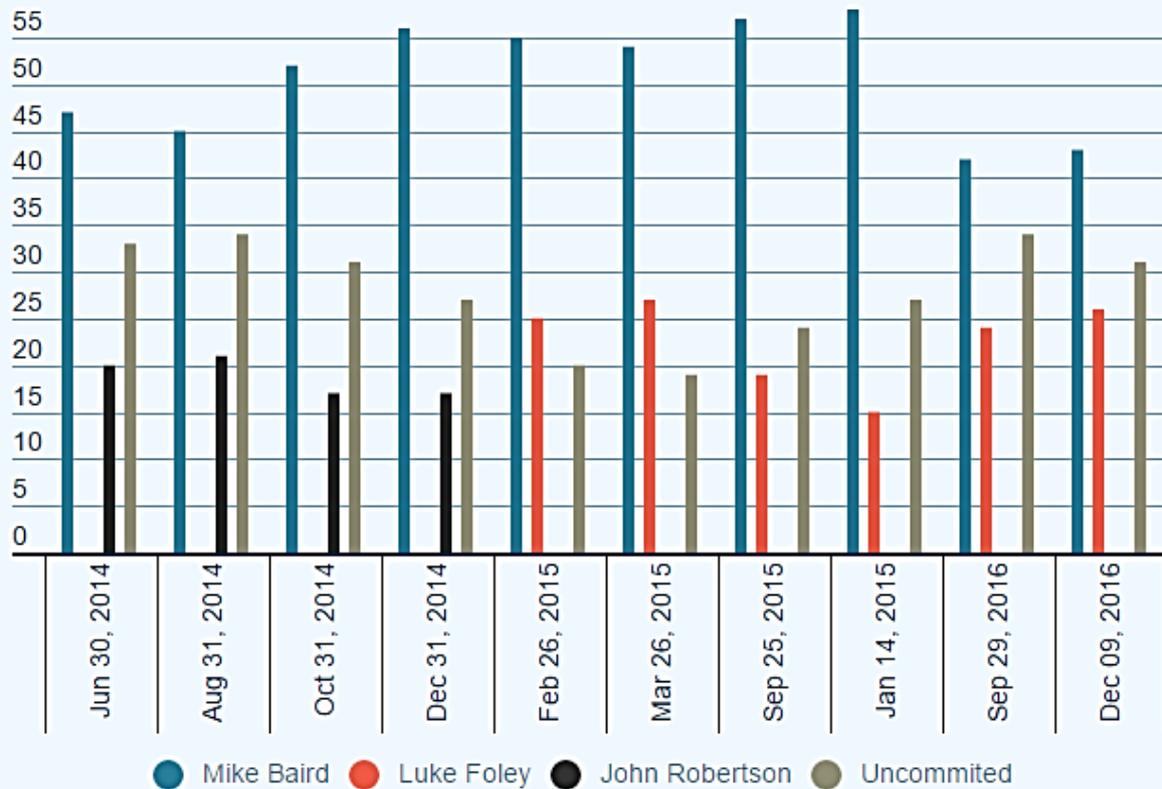
Since October, the government has backed down on a number of key decisions including the ban on greyhound racing, later announcing he would roll out shark nets along the state’s north coast after resisting such a move for months.

Mr Baird and Mr Grant yesterday said the contentious late night venue closing and lockout laws in the Sydney CBD and Kings Cross, introduced by former premier Barry O’Farrell, would be relaxed while bottle shops across the state would be allowed to trade until 11pm instead of being forced to shut at 10pm.

Mr Baird also moved to end a tumultuous period at the Independent Commission Against Corruption, legislating for the agency’s reform, a change that led to the departure of Commissioner Megan Latham.

NSW BETTER PREMIER

Who do you think would make the better premier?



Labor, the Shooters and One Nation have all seized on another major Coalition policy, the forced amalgamation of councils, as a key source of dissatisfaction with Mr Baird, a change that is particularly sensitive in several regional electorates.

The last premier with a net satisfaction as low as Mr Baird's minus 15 was Kristina Keneally in early 2011, when she recorded a net satisfaction score of minus 27, months before the Coalition won in a landslide election.

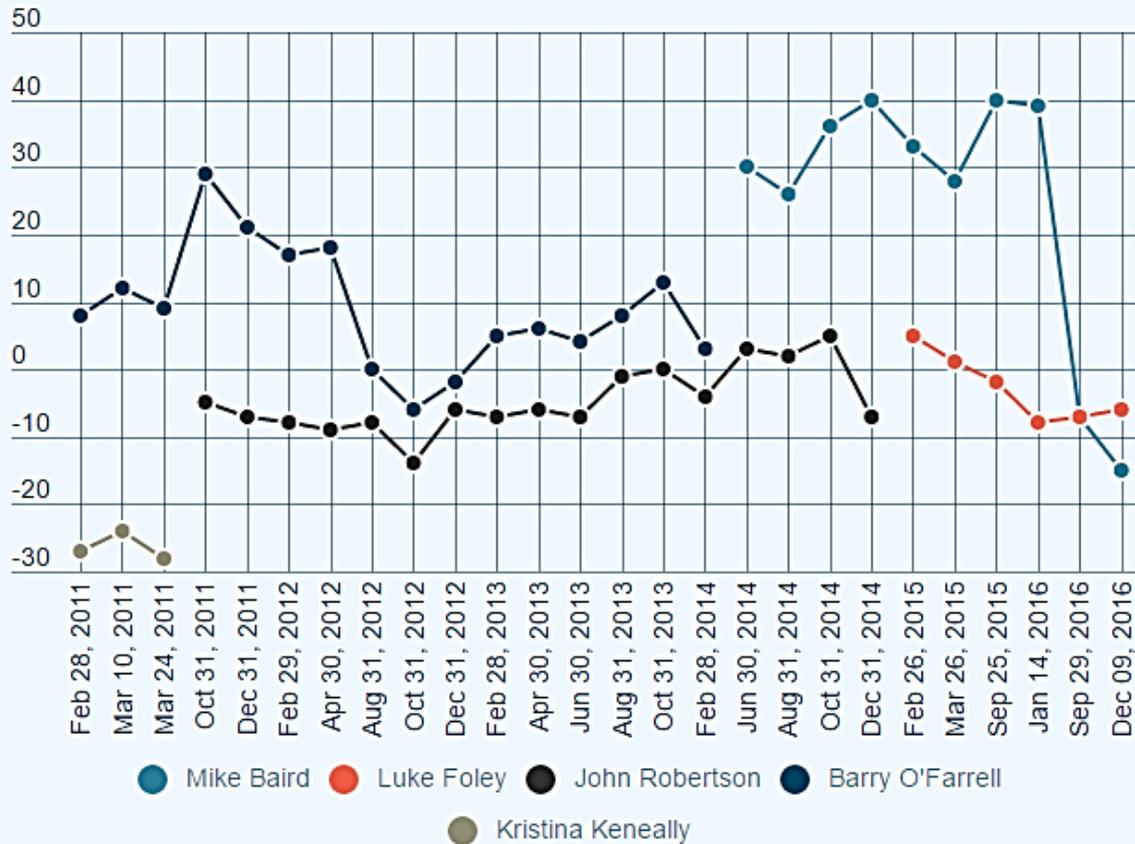
Mr Baird will attempt to reset the political debate early next year by reshuffling his cabinet, a move that will likely mean the removal of key figures including Health Minister Jillian Skinner and Education Minister Adrian Piccoli.

The latest speculation, more than a month before Mr Baird must make his decision, puts Mr Barilaro in contention for the education portfolio, while Attorney-General Gabrielle Upton and Community Services Minister Brad Hazzard are likely to be moved to other ministries.

The Shooters have already begun laying the groundwork for a more concerted push into seats long held by the Nationals, having never run lower house candidates before Phil Donato's successful campaign in Orange.

NSW LEADERS' NET SATISFACTION

Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way the Premier is doing his job? Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way the Leader of the Opposition is doing his job?



Latest poll: Nov-Dec, 2016 | Sample size: 1567 | Uncommitted: 6% | Error rate: 2.5%

THE AUSTRALIAN 

“The Nationals have never found a Liberal Party policy they wouldn’t support, even if it hurts people in rural areas,” Shooters MP Robert Borsak said earlier this week.

The Greens’ vote has remained steady at 11 per cent.

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/state-politics/mike-baird-slumps-to-lowest-rating-as-coalition-clings-to-its-lead/news-story/3d2725e40d1cf002daa20eb9ce63186c>