

Evan Hughes running for Labor in seat of Wentworth: shadowing a shadow of Turnbull's former self

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Damien Murphy



Taking the plunge: Evan Hughes is running for Labor against Malcolm Turnbull in the seat of Wentworth. Photo: James Brickwood

Political wannabe Evan Hughes, the man who would be Turnbull, stands knee-deep at Watsons Bay demanding to be taken seriously.

He is Labor's hope for Malcolm Turnbull's seat of Wentworth.

Hughes is standing on the ALP platform but he reckons his most potent weapon is the man who used to be known as Malcolm Turnbull

Hughes staged the first stunt of the 2016 election campaign to draw attention to the things the prime minister once stood for.

"There was no mention of climate change in the budget or anything that Malcolm Turnbull's said since but everyone knows I'll be in over my head if you came back to Watsons Bay in the years to come," he said.

"Then there's his chickening out on same-sex marriage, continuing Tony Abbott's Gonski backflip, allowing the fig trees to be axed and not reining in his friends' mad push to spend \$38 million developing Bondi Pavilion.

"Once he was a progressive sort of guy and most loved him in this electorate - he received 63 per cent of primary votes in 2013 - but he's been forced to become somebody else by those Liberals he did a deal with the knock off Abbott."

Hughes believes Turnbull has proved to be such an Abbott that Labor will win the election.

"But if Malcolm does win government, it will only be by a couple of seats and you can't see him lasting, let alone shaking free of those he sold his soul to; he won't be able to get anything progressive through with that lot."

Falling only slightly short of Turnbull's life of glittering prizes, Hughes, 30, the son of art dealer and gallery owner Ray Hughes, was a scholarship boy at Cranbrook and a Cambridge University graduate (including one union game against Oxford) who works in the finance sector. He is married with two young children.

Hughes the Father was a member of the same Brisbane ALP branch as Peter Beattie when the politician-to-be was trying to wrest control from the dead hands of old unionists and Hughes the Younger followed suit, joining Labor at 18.

Wentworth, one of the original federation electorates, has never been won by the ALP, but Hughes, undaunted, reckons it is full of progressives who have voted for Turnbull, partly because he represented an acceptable face of Liberalism especially when Abbott took the party to "a dark place" that has now succeeded in capturing the prime minister.

"They could assuage their guilt, but not now," Hughes said.

Hughes looks the epitome of a money marketeer and knows the value of a lasting image.

He happily suggested going to sea for the photo shoot and as water lapped his knees, a Watsons Bay passer-by inquired what was going on. When informed he was looking at Labor's man for Wentworth little guilt was evident: "Go and drown yourself, mate."

<http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/evan-hughes-running-for-labor-in-seat-of-wentworth-shadowing-a-shadow-of-turnbulls-former-self-20160506-gooau1.html>