

# Voters want the homework done before a big announcement not after

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Gladys Berejiklian is confident she will be able to convince voters that the government changed its mind on Sydney stadiums because it listened and did its homework.

Over and over, the Premier repeated on Thursday that her government was doing what the community wanted and had reached the right decision when it came to stadiums.



*The NSW Government has changed its plans for the Olympic Stadium, however Allianz Stadium will still be rebuilt entirely.*

Yet, until her announcement on Thursday, Berejiklian and her junior sports minister Stuart Ayres had been committed to a different policy, one that was announced in November last year without any business case. Without any homework.

Their new plan - to refurbish ANZ at Homebush and make it a rectangular stadium but stick to a knockdown and rebuild of Allianz at Moore Park - may be an improvement on the earlier version.

Allianz is ageing and needs significant work. ANZ still appears relatively new in the minds of Sydneysiders and the memory of the Olympics means there is fondness for that stadium.

But regardless of how she sells her new version - including using new business cases prepared by Infrastructure NSW as justification - her decision will be seen as a backflip.

Backflips are not new for Berejiklian. In her first six months in office she wound back council mergers, postponed reform of an emergency services levy, and closed the door to the potential privatisation of several regional hospitals.



*Premier Gladys Berejiklian after speaking to the media on Thursday. Photo: AAP*

No matter how she sells it, this is another backflip.

Her backbenchers had made it clear to her that they were nervous about the initial policy and how it would play out in an election year.

They felt the government had failed in selling it to the voters and were handing a free pass to the Opposition, who could campaign on the powerful message of “schools and hospitals before stadiums”.

The Coalition know all too well that the major strength Labor has over the Liberals and Nationals is its ability to read the politics.

Voters want the government to do its homework before a big announcement, not several months later. Berejiklian may not believe it is a backflip but it will be hard to convince the electorate otherwise.

And that creates a different message that will be hard to shift. Berejiklian will now have to spend as much time defending her backflip as she will her policy.

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