

# Orange by-election: High noon for Nationals leader Troy Grant after Orange disaster

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**PREMIER Mike Baird has admitted the Orange by-election result was a “terrible” result for the government but insisted his deputy Troy Grant should continue leading the Nationals.**



- [The day that triggered the siege of Troy \(Grant\)](#)
- [Broadcaster broadsides cost Nats in Orange](#)
- [Deputy Premier to face leadership spill as soon as Tuesday](#)

The Shooters, Fishers and Farmers look set to win Orange, a safe National seat since 1947, following Saturday’s by-election, at which voters expressed their fury at the botched greyhound ban and council mergers.

Mr Grant faces a leadership spill motion at tomorrow's Nationals partyroom meeting and the loss of his job as Nationals Leader and Deputy Premier.

"It's a terrible result — that's the truth of it," Mr Baird said this morning.



*NSW Premier Mike Baird has taken responsibility for the series of missteps that have led to the fall in popularity of the coalition. Picture: Stephen Cooper*

"Certainly the community there has sent a very loud message and it's something that we need to consider over coming weeks."

The Premier denied reports he had taken the extraordinary step of ringing Nationals MPs to rally support for Mr Grant.

"It is a matter for the National partyroom to decide their leader," he added.

"But at the same time I do have a right and an opportunity to say that I think Troy Grant should continue.

"He is an exceptional person who is doing a very good job in difficult circumstances.

"Can we do better? Yes, we can and I say both of us in that — we both can."

The final result is yet to be declared and despite putting on a brave face, Mr Baird appeared resigned to a loss.

He said he took responsibility for the string of missteps, including the greyhound ban debacle, that has led to the plunge in support for the Coalition.



*A glum looking Nationals leader Troy Grant speaks to the media during voting at the Orange by-election. Picture: Jonathan Ng*

The Premier was speaking at a press conference on the government's proposed new Western Sydney Metro rail line.

In the disastrous by-election result in Orange the Nationals appear to have lost the once-safe seat to the Shooters in a 33.8 per cent primary vote swing against the party.

Skills Minister John Barilaro is the frontrunner to take on Mr Grant for the leadership, with Coffs Harbour MP Andrew Fraser saying he was planning to move for the spilling of all Nationals leadership positions at Tuesday morning's party room meeting, the last scheduled party room meeting for the year.

## **HIGH NOON FOR GRANT**

[Mr Grant was making phone calls to colleagues criticising Mr Barilaro yesterday](#) in a bid to snuff out the move, while upper house leader Duncan Gay was also making calls on behalf of Mr Grant.

Other options floated among MPs include Niall Blair leading the party from the upper house, but what would be more likely to have a chance of success would be a Barilaro-Blair ticket.

Mr Barilaro told *The Daily Telegraph* yesterday: “The party has a process in dealing with leadership as per the media speculation. I will allow that process to determine what happens with the leadership.”



*Orange, Shooters Fishers and Farmers Party candidate Philip Donato at his home outside of Orange with four of his sons from left James, 18, Mathew, 16, Sean, 12, and Peter, 17, after receiving big swings towards himself in yesterdays Orange by-election. Picture: Jonathan Ng*

There would have to be a successful spill motion first before anyone could run against Mr Grant.

News of the possible move on Mr Grant comes as *The Daily Telegraph* can reveal the Nationals leader recently proposed to his party room that “baggy green caps” — like those of the Australian test cricket team — be handed out to all current and former Nationals members of parliament.

**Coming hot on the heels of his decision to have “Deputy Premier” “Troy coins”** made to give to foreign dignitaries, *The Daily Telegraph* has been told of the recent cap pronouncement by Mr Grant, aimed at celebrating the 100-year anniversary of the National Party.

“It was so irrelevant and silly,” one MP said.

A spokeswoman for Mr Grant said the plan to present the caps at a dinner celebrating the Nationals’ anniversary next March received unanimous party room support.



*John Barilaro, MP for Monaro and NSW Nationals leader and Deputy Premier Troy Grant. Mr Barilaro is being touted as a possible successor to his leader. Picture: Ray Strange*

**COMMENT: The National Party is broken and they need to work out how to fix it**

Last night Mr Grant's people were hoping a preference count could save them in Orange with the party behind, but scrutineers discovering that preferences were not going as hard against the Nationals as expected.

After 40.9 per cent of the two party preferred count, Shooters candidate Phil Donato was leading the Nationals' Scott Barrett by 51.7 per cent to 48.3 per cent last night. Respected ABC election analyst Antony Green was projecting a 51-49 Shooters win.

After all primary votes were counted, the Nationals' primary vote was at 31.53 per cent — 30 per cent lower than the 2015 election result, with the Shooters on 23.94 per cent and Labor on 18.44 per cent.

A large number of voters had exhausted their vote and not preferenced, but a Labor and Shooters how to vote card preference deal was expected to be enough to get the Shooters over the line.

Mr Gay said despite the result, he believed the Nationals should stick with Mr Grant.



*NSW Primary Industries Minister Niall Blair is being floated as a possible leadership alternative.*



*Nationals leader Troy Grant with Nationals candidate for Orange, Scott Barrett. Picture: Jonathan Ng*

“We have been sent a big message and if we don’t listen we have got serious troubles going forward,” Mr Gay said.



*Nationals candidate for Orange, Scott Barrett shaking hands with his father Ian Barrett with his mother Belinda by his side at the Orange City Bowling Club after the Orange by-election. Picture: Jonathan Ng*

Mr Fraser indicated that he would move a spill motion on Tuesday.

“All leadership positions should be spilt,” he said. Asked if he would move the spill motion, Mr Fraser said “more than likely”.

Burrinjuck MP Katrina Hodgkinson said: “We had a brilliant candidate in Scott Barrett. Clearly he was let down and I strongly regret that.”

Barwon MP Kevin Humphries referenced Mr Grant’s sacking of parliamentary secretaries Ms Hodgkinson and [Chris Gulaptis for crossing the floor over the now-overturned greyhound racing ban](#), in terms of whether the leader should consider his position.

“The leadership needs to be held accountable,” he said.

Last night Mr Grant was defiant: “I intend to remain leader for the remainder of this term.”

**THE NATIONALS**

## HIGH NOON FOR THE NATS



**John Barilaro**  
**SKILLS MINISTER**  
 Member for marginal seat of Monaro since 2011 and minister since 2014. The father of three is a successful former businessman and councillor in Queanbeyan.

**Niall Blair**  
**PRIMARY INDUSTRIES AND WATER MINISTER**  
 The former Nationals chairman is seen as a future leadership prospect even if it does not happen now due to his spot in the upper house.





**Troy Grant**  
**DEPUTY PREMIER**  
 Elected member for Dubbo in 2011. A former long-serving police officer, Grant has been a minister since 2014, Deputy Premier since late 2014, and Justice and Police Minister since the 2015 election.

**Paul Toole**  
**LOCAL GOVERNMENT MINISTER**  
 The member for Bathurst is keen but likely hindered due to being the voice of local council amalgamations.



<http://www.adelaidenow.com.au/news/national/orange-byelection-high-noon-for-nationals-leader-troy-grant-after-orange-disaster/news-story/e73aa8102d06cd614aae39c99312487b> .