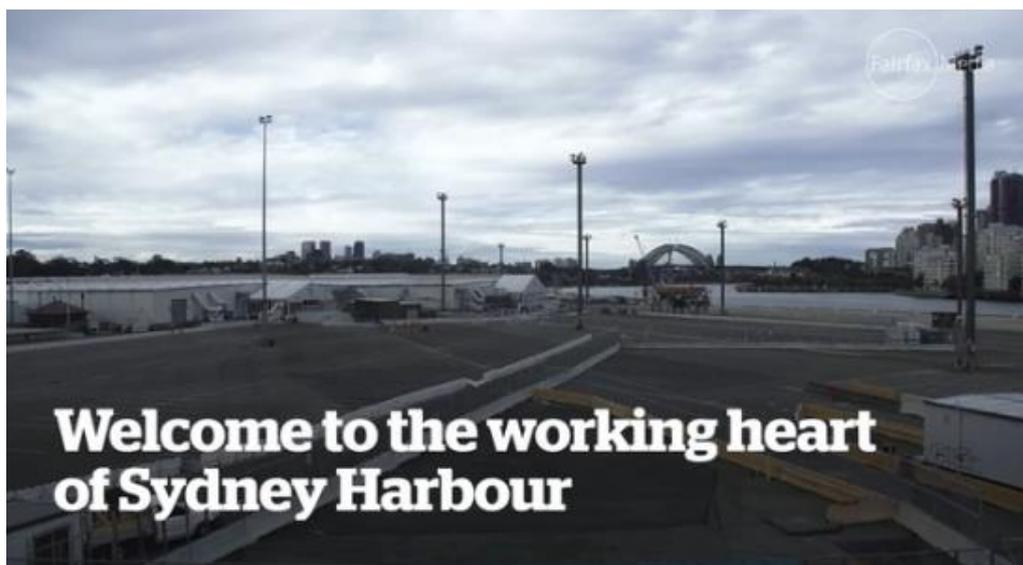


Key metro and regional seats at risk for Mike Baird government amid popularity plunge

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The seat of Penrith - a symbol of the Coalition's success in western Sydney at the 2011 NSW election that brought it to power - is at serious risk of falling to Labor amid a slide in popularity for the Baird government, new polling shows.

A ReachTEL poll commissioned by the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union (AMWU) shows Labor's primary vote in Penrith at 37.9 per cent compared with the Liberals' 32.2 per cent.



Bays Precinct industries warn Baird

Key maritime industries are concerned for the future vital ports and marine infrastructure on prime harbourside land around the inner city Bays Precinct.

The Greens polled 3.4 per cent, others 16.5 per cent and 9.9 per cent were undecided, according to the poll of 757 residents taken the Sunday night before last.

A two party preferred figure was not reported for this and three other seats polled as the high "other" votes relative to the 2015 result meant the preference flows recorded at that election could not be applied.

But the result strongly suggests NSW trade and sports minister Stuart Ayres has a major fight on his hands in 2019 to retain the seat, which is held on a 6.2 per cent margin.



Key seats at risk: Premier Mike Baird. Photo: Edwina Pickles

It comes after a Fairfax Media-commissioned ReachTEL poll showed Labor and the Coalition at 50-50 on a two party preferred basis - a swing of four percentage points against the government compared with the 2015 election result.

The AMWU also commissioned polling in the regional seat of Orange, where a byelection is due to be held on November 12 after Andrew Gee won the federal seat of Calare at the July election.

Orange is held on a safe 21.7 per cent margin, but the results suggest a collapse in the Nationals' first preference vote from 65.6 per cent at the 2015 election to 37.6 per cent.

The poll of 697 residents recorded 29.3 per cent of first preference votes for Labor, the Greens 6.3 per cent, others 13.8 per cent and 13.1 per cent were undecided.

Polling in two other seats - Upper Hunter held by the Nationals' Michael Johnsen on a margin of 2.2 per cent and Kiama, held by the Liberals' Gareth Ward on 8.7 per cent - suggests they are also in play.

In Upper Hunter, the poll of 711 residents had Labor's primary vote at 34.3 per cent, the Nationals' at 37.4 per cent, the Greens 6.8 per cent, others 11 per cent and 10.5 per cent were undecided.

In Kiama the poll of 721 residents recorded Labor's primary vote at 37 per cent compared with the Liberals' 31.7 per cent. The Greens recorded 12.6 per cent, others 10.9 per cent and 7.8 per cent were undecided.

AMWU NSW secretary Tim Ayres said the polling "demonstrates that the Baird government is on the nose in regional and suburban NSW".



Polling suggests trade and sports minister Stuart Ayres could struggle to retain his seat of Penrith. Photo: Louie Douvis

The NSW government's announcement that 512 new rail carriages would be built in South Korea showed it "didn't care about the impact of the decision to send trains off shore on families in regional communities".

"It just turns out the feeling is mutual," Mr Ayres said. "We're going to campaign in all of these seats and maybe more to make sure that the message sinks in that regional and suburban blue collars jobs matter."

<http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/key-metro-and-regional-seats-at-risk-for-mike-baird-government-amid-popularity-plunge-20160904-gr8g7c.html>