

# NSW Premier spins complete rubbish as Liberals hit the panic button

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*NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian wildly exaggerated anti-government swings.  
Picture: Jonathan Ng*

The best political spinners always use at least some of the truth when talking up their cause. Sometimes politicians choose to do their own spinning and that rule about some of the truth can be forgotten.

There can be no doubt that the onset of by-elections in NSW causes the Premier, Gladys Berejiklian, to warm to the task of doing her own spinning and wild exaggeration is presented as fact. Last week, before the vote in the country elections of Murray and Cootamundra and the Sydney-based seat of Blacktown, the Premier was out and about proclaiming that 19 per cent swings against the government were a “given”. This is complete rubbish of course, but it would seem that Berejiklian has been running a government losing support on a daily basis and the most recent examples in her own state are the record anti-government swings.

Three by-elections — in Gosford, Manly and North Sydney — were held just six months ago, in April. It was here that the Premier first peddled her crook figures. After the swings against her government were 13 per cent in Gosford

and about 20 per cent more in the Liberal heartland seats of Manly and North Sydney, she declared that 19 per cent was in some way a normal anti-government swing. In fact, the average anti-government swing in by-elections since 1988 is 10.5 per cent. In her feeble attempts to justify the huge drifts against her coalition, she has doubled the true figure.

Mind you the way politics is going in NSW, the Premier seems to be working hard to make those crook figures right. Massive 20 per cent anti-government swings are not “givens”. They are merely reflections of an electorate which still can’t believe the decisions on dog racing and council amalgamations and which fears massive tolls will cripple them when all the new Sydney road infrastructure projects are completed. The Nationals are on the nose in the bush and the Liberals are copping huge amounts of flak in the cities.

After the debacle of the Orange by-election, the Nationals dumped Troy Grant for John Barilaro. If the plan was to outlive and outlast the ill feeling towards Grant because of the greyhound racing decision, then it failed. In NSW the National Party is clearly in deep trouble and it is worth noting that, for reasons I have been utterly unable to fathom, One Nation has not yet registered in NSW. Had they been in the field on Saturday two awful results could have been made much worse by the loss of those rural, conservative heartland electorates.

The government’s own research must have demonstrated enough for the full-scale panic which rocked the Coalition. That panic not only made the Premier treat the truth with scant respect but it also spent an inordinate amount on advertising. As quipped: “The government spent more on advertising in the campaign than they had spent on schools in those two seats in the last decade”.

It would appear that the Nationals spent the full advertising cap. Labor estimates the Shooters were knocked off their winning perch by a half million-dollar advertising blitz the likes of which is simply never seen in country electorates like these.

If the Premier can’t manage to drag up her socks then yet another bastion of the conservatives will fall to Labor in 18 months.

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/opinion/columnists/nsw-premier-spins-complete-rubbish-as-liberals-hit-the-panic-button/news-story/f5d4ad604475f9c21a23faba50f32b00>