

# Orange by-election: National Party set to survive as Shooters fall short

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EXCLUSIVE Andrew Clennell, State Political Editor



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THE National Party appeared to be in reach of an unlikely result in the Orange by-election with candidate Scott Barrett 66 votes ahead when counting finished last night with a full two-party preferred vote recount to be held today.

National Party state director Nathan Quigley said his party had edged ahead of the Shooters Fishers and Farmers party in the once-safe seat but there had been some confusion late in counting over a misplaced bundle of votes.

A win by the Nationals would be a surprise given the Shooters had led the count for the central west seat since Sunday following a 21 per cent swing against the Nats.



*Nationals candidate for Orange, Scott Barrett, with supporters at the Orange City Bowling Club. Picture: Jonathan Ng*

In fact, earlier yesterday the National Party seemed resigned to a narrow loss with Education Minister Adrian Piccoli, who on Monday quit as deputy leader alongside his leader Troy Grant, going ballistic in Question Time, pretending to shoot Labor MPs as he protested at the Shooters-Labor preference deal that got the minor party over the line.

Mr Piccoli, who is tipped to be dumped from cabinet in a reshuffle, went in hard on the last parliamentary sitting day of the year yelling “Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!” at Labor members and accusing them of supporting a party that wants to dump John Howard’s national gun laws drawn up after the Port Arthur massacre.

Mr Piccoli said Opposition Leader Luke Foley was “celebrating with the Shooters Party the other night”.

“So what’s he celebrating?” he asked. “AR-15 assault rifles? Because that’s what they want in NSW. That’s what you’ve given them.



*Shooters Party candidate Philip Donato NSW Minister for Education Adrian Piccoli*

“I’ve got a wife and two children. They’re eight and six. And we go on holidays. We may have been at Port Arthur that day.”

Mr Foley said last night: “Labor makes no apology for recommending that voters put the National Party last at the Orange by-election, given the Nationals’ failure to deliver on a range of policies for the people of the central west. We unequivocally support Australia’s strong gun laws, unlike Mr Piccoli’s government which attempted to weaken them at the most recent COAG meeting.”

Shooters candidate Phil Donato said last night: “Clearly the greyhound (ban and) council mergers played a massive role in the swing — but also the fact it was a by-election. People were thinking, ‘hang on we voted for Andrew Gee ... now he’s abandoned us’.”



Philip Donato thanks Orange voters

<http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/nsw/orange-byelection-national-party-set-to-survive-as-shooters-fall-short/news-story/1a1355fc5d7f0bfb8b6d13941432a8ac>