

Orange byelection: Shooters Party takes first NSW lower house seat

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Sean Nicholls

The Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party has secured its first seat in lower house of the NSW Parliament after its candidate, Philip Donato, was declared victorious in the Orange byelection by just 50 votes.

The final result was decided on Monday, following a recount conducted at the request of the NSW Nationals on Friday night.



Shooter's Party secures seat of Orange

The Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party has won its first seat in the lower house of the NSW Parliament after its candidate, Philip Donato, was declared victorious in the Orange byelection by just 50 votes. Courtesy ABC News 24.

The final result saw a record 34 per cent swing against the Nationals on primary votes and a two-candidate-preferred swing of 21.8 per cent.

Orange is now held by the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers by just 0.1 per cent, making it the most marginal seat in NSW.



Phil Donato has secured the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party its first seat in the lower house of the NSW Parliament.

"I'm humbled and deeply honoured by the support I've received and the trust the community has placed in me," Mr Donato told Fairfax Media.

"I will work hard as I can to represent the whole electorate and obtain the trust of those who voted and didn't vote for me."

The Nationals candidate, Scott Barrett, congratulated Mr Donato on his win and praised his "upstanding and respectful" conduct during the campaign.

"A clear message was sent from the people of the Central West at this byelection, and it's a message that must be heeded," Mr Barrett said in a statement.

"The Nationals are still the only party that can truly represent regional NSW, but we clearly need to re-engage with the people of Orange, better communicate what we have delivered, and work to regain the trust of our constituents."

The byelection was prompted by Nationals MP Andrew Gee's successful move to the seat of Calare at the July federal election.

The result led to Police Minister Troy Grant resigning as deputy premier and leader of the NSW Nationals and his deputy, Education Minister Adrian Piccoli, not recontesting his position.

Skills Minister John Barilaro was elected leader of the Nationals and sworn in as Deputy Premier, while Primary Industries Minister Niall Blair became his deputy.

There has been speculation about the reason for the result, including that it was a backlash to the bungled attempt to shut down the greyhound racing industry, a reaction to forced council amalgamations and local job losses.

On Thursday, Mr Piccoli lashed out at the Labor Party for its decision to direct preferences to the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers in Orange.

In extraordinary scenes, Mr Piccoli feigned shooting members of the opposition front bench to make a point that Labor had helped elect a party that wants to repeal national firearms laws.

Mr Piccoli's future is up in the air before a cabinet reshuffle.

Premier Mike Baird has said a reshuffle will not occur until early next year, but it is understood Mr Barilaro is pushing for it to happen before Christmas.

<http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/orange-by-election-shooters-party-takes-first-nsw-lower-house-seat-20161121-gsu1qm.html>