



## Australia Votes to Crush Carbon Tax and Big Government

Voters in Australia delivered a landslide victory for a more liberty-minded coalition on September 7 that ran on a market-friendly platform and vowed to abolish the deeply unpopular “carbon tax,” reportedly winning the biggest parliamentary majority in about a decade. The new prime minister, Tony Abbott (shown) of the Liberal Party, presented himself as a socially conservative leader who would rein in high taxes and spending while slashing foreign aid and [half-baked “green” policies](#) supposedly aimed at combating “[global warming](#).” Evidently, Australians liked the plan.



The crushing defeat for the giant government-promoting Labor Party, which helped foist [unpopular](#) and [hugely expensive pseudo-environmentalist](#) policies on Australia, led to the resignation of party leader and former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd. In the House of Representatives, it appears that Abbott’s coalition — composed of so-called “center-right” parties including his Liberal Party and the National Party — secured at least 91 out of 150 seats so far. About half of the Senate seats were also up for grabs, but the full results have not yet been released by the Australian Electoral Commission.

“Something very significant has happened today. Today the people of Australia have declared the right to government to Australia ... belongs to you the people of Australia,” Abbott said after it became clear that his coalition had secured a solid victory. “From today I declare that Australia is under new management ... Australia is once more open for business.” Indeed, among the primary selling points for Abbott’s coalition was dismantling broad swaths of the bloated government that had been steadily growing in size and scope amid six years of Labor Party domination.

At the top of the new coalition government’s agenda, at least on the campaign trail, was dismantling the [wildly unpopular](#) and [extraordinarily costly](#) so-called “carbon pricing mechanism” imposed by the Labor Party and its partners. The controversial scheme went into effect in mid-2012, and, as *The New American* and numerous other sources have reported since then, the results have been disastrous: [Record business failures](#), [soaring prices for essentials such as energy](#), and a major plunge in the nation’s economic competitiveness.



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on September 9, 2013

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When the scheme was approved by a razor-thin margin in 2011, Abbott, then leader of the opposition, [gave a “pledge in blood”](#) that his party would undo the damage upon being returned to power. However, now that voters [expressed their wishes](#), it is not yet certain whether the new government will be able to follow through on its pledges, according to analysts. How much can be done will depend in part, at least, on the Senate election results and being able to work with independents and smaller parties.

“In the first 100 days, the new government will try to get as much through parliament as it can,” political-marketing researcher Andrew Hughes at the Australian National University in Canberra was [quoted as saying](#) in media reports. “Labor will try to put up resistance on scrapping the carbon price, but it may not be able to block it, depending on how the Senate finally plays out.” The new government’s efforts may be contingent on securing the support of independents and largely conservative-leaning minor parties in the upper house, analysts explained.

Several sources have offered some insight into how the bid to secure Senate support might work out. David Leyonhjelm with the libertarian-leaning Liberal Democrat Party, who appears likely to become a senator from New South Wales after the latest election, said it looks like small parties will end up controlling the balance of power in the upper house. That could mean trouble for parts of Abbott’s plan, but it does not mean that the coalition’s agenda will flop entirely.

“We wouldn’t stop him from getting rid of the carbon tax,” Leyonhjelm was [quoted as saying](#) in press reports. “But when it comes to his big spending plans he may be in trouble, such as direct action on climate change and his paid parental leave — he won’t be getting any support from us. We would much rather have tax cuts.”

While there may be difficulties in undoing the “progress” made on radical “environmentalism” under Labor — and Abbott has been known to waffle on the issues — prominent analysts opposed to the supposed “green agenda” celebrated the electoral victory. “Today is a great day not only in Australian history, but also in world history,” [wrote](#) well-known American meteorologist and climate skeptic Anthony Watts, who runs the influential “Watts Up With That” blog. “It marks the day when people of character and sensibility pushed back against an overwrought and pointless green agenda, and pushed back in a big way. They’ve had enough, and they’ve scraped the Krudd off their shoes and are moving forward.”

Also high on the priority list for the incoming alliance is reducing the tax burden, according to campaign pledges. Among other points, the new coalition is seeking to repeal a 30-percent tax on mining profits imposed by the Labor Party. Abbott, an economist and former businessman who supports the perpetuation of Australia’s constitutional monarchy under the British crown, is reportedly hoping to cut business taxes as well. However, with plans to expand government in some areas — a multi-billion-dollar parental leave scheme, for example — analysts and even some skeptical colleagues have expressed concerns.

Regularly described as a “devout Catholic,” Abbott, who trained to become a priest before getting married, styles himself a social conservative. Among other positions, he has publicly expressed support for the unborn and family values, while opposing abortion, euthanasia, stem-cell research, and using government to redefine marriage to include homosexual relationships. He also tried unsuccessfully to stop the introduction of the abortion pill in Australia, for example, while seeking to [strengthen marriage](#). However, Abbott has also publicly opposed criminalizing the killing of unborn children, saying, like “pro-choice” U.S. politicians, that abortion should be “safe, legal, and rare.”



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According to news reports, Abbott and his coalition also plan to revamp the government's foreign affairs policies — at least to some degree. For example, he will reportedly seek to stem the tide of asylum seekers flowing into Australia, which has caused controversy, especially as the number of refugees continues to expand. The coalition also hopes to slash tax-funded “foreign aid” by billions of dollars. Analysts [said](#) the Australian government is set to become more “introspective” than it was under the Labor-led coalition.

On Syria, while Abbott suggested he would support a U.S.-led military intervention if it were to happen, the incoming prime minister also urged caution. “It’s not goodies versus baddies; it’s baddies versus baddies,” he [said](#) about the warring parties in the conflict, referring to the well-documented horrors perpetrated both by the Assad regime and the jihadist “rebels.” While he was attacked by the Labor Party as being from the “John Wayne School of international relations” for his allegedly simplistic analysis of the conflict, much of the public apparently appreciated the honesty.

Abbott has also been active in promoting aboriginal interests, including support for a formal recognition of aborigines in the Constitution. “So our challenge is to do now in these times what should have been done 200 or 100 years ago to acknowledge Aboriginal people in our country’s foundation document,” he said earlier this year. “In short, we need to atone for the omissions and for the hardness of heart of our forebears to enable us all to embrace the future as a united people.” On the other hand, however, the incoming prime minister has also reportedly suggested that government schools ought to be more focused on teaching the nation’s European heritage rather than its oftentimes brutal treatment of natives in the past.

Libertarians [appear to be](#) largely conflicted on Abbott, with some suggesting that, if nothing else, his coalition is likely to be friendlier toward liberty and the market than Labor would be. That appears to be the case to most analysts. Not everyone agrees that the change will be serious, however. “The Liberals exist simply to provide the Australian people with a feckless and impotent vehicle of dissatisfaction with Labor’s extreme statism,” [argued](#) Anthony Coralluzzo, director of the Ron Paul-inspired Liberty Australia organization, in a response to Abbott’s support for “draconian, victim disarmament gun confiscations.”

But while the latest election may seem like fairly good news for conservatives and liberty-minded Australians, it appears that Abbott, a Rhodes Scholar, has also received a decent amount of support from elements of the establishment. Among the heavy-hitters who backed his campaign, for example, is media baron Rupert Murdoch, who observed that Australians were “sick of public sector workers and phony welfare scroungers sucking life out of [the] economy.” Murdoch’s Australia-based news empire reportedly offered strong support for Abbott throughout the campaign.

Meanwhile, U.K. Prime Minister David Cameron, who has fiendishly supported the establishment’s war-mongering while working hard to keep the British public from voting to secede from the deeply unpopular European Union, also celebrated Abbott’s election. “It’ll be great working with another centre right leader,” Cameron tweeted after the election.

On everything from oppressive gun control and “green” schemes to high taxes and anti-market regulations, it appears to most analysts as though the incoming government should be more liberty-oriented than the previous one — at least if it follows through with its pledges once in power. However, as in most of the West and indeed the world, government usurpations of power are hard to undo even when there is a genuine push behind the efforts. Whether Australia will truly shift to the right under Abbott’s coalition remains to be seen.



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*Photo of Tony Abbott: AP Images*

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