

Faces of the Senate

Using polling to project the potential future makeup of the Senate.

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The Australia Institute routinely polls a representative sample of the Australian population on a variety of issues, including voting intention. The results of two of these polls from earlier this year have been averaged in order to project the potential makeup of the Senate in three scenarios: following a half-Senate election, following the subsequent half-Senate election and following a double dissolution.

These projections show that while the exact Senate results are uncertain, on current polling the Coalition is unlikely to improve its position in any subsequent election, even taking into account One Nation and other minor right-wing parties that can be expected to support them on many issues.

On current polling, One Nation could be a big winner in future elections. One Nation looks likely to improve its position in any subsequent election, including rising to a potential six seats following the 2022 half-Senate election or a double dissolution.

Summary of results

	Current	2019 half-Senate	2022 half-Senate	Double Dissolution
Liberal/National	29	29	26	24
Labor	26	27	26	27
Greens	9	8	10	9
One Nation	4	4	6	6
NXT	3	3	2	4
Independents	1	1	2	5
Lambie	1	2	2	1
Hinch	1			
Conservatives	1	1		
LDP	1			
Unknown		1	2	

Current Senate (2016-2019)

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	Terr.	Total
Liberal/National	5	5	5	5	3	4	2	29
Labor	4	4	4	4	3	5	2	26
Greens	1	2	1	2	1	2		9
One Nation	1		2	1				4
NXT					3			3
Independents					1			1
Lambie						1		1
Hinch		1						1
Conservatives					1			1
LDP	1							1

After first half-Senate (2019-2022)

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	Terr.	Total
Liberal/National	3/2	3/2	3/2	3/2	1/2	2/2	0/2	29
Labor	3/2	2/2	2/2	2/2	2/2	2/2	0/2	27
Greens	0/1	1/1		1/1	0/1	1/1		8
One Nation	0/1		1/1	0/1				4
NXT					2/1			3
Independents			0/1					1
Lambie						1/1		2
Hinch								
Conservatives					1/0			1
LDP								
Unknown		0/1						1

Note: The figure before the slash is the number of ongoing senators, and the figure after the slash is the number of new senators.

The final seat in Victoria in any half-Senate election was considered too close to call in our analysis. One Nation was the highest remaining candidate, on 0.61 of a quota. However, the closeness of other candidates, including an unspecified Independent on 0.51, meant that we were not prepared to assign the seat to One Nation.

After second half-Senate (2022-2025)

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	Terr.	Total
Liberal/National	2/2	2/2	2/2	2/2	2/2	2/2	0/2	26
Labor	2/2	2/2	2/2	2/2	2/2	2/2	0/2	26
Greens	1/1	1/1		1/1	1/1	1/1		10
One Nation	1/1	0/0	1/1	1/1				6
NXT					1/1			2
Independents			1/1					2
Lambie						1/1		2
Hinch								
Conservatives								
LDP								
Unknown		1/1						2

After a double dissolution

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	Terr.	Total
Liberal/National	4	4	4	3	3	4	2	24
Labor	4	4	4	5	3	5	2	27
Greens	1	2	1	2	1	2		9
One Nation	1	1	2	1	1			6
NXT	1				3			4
Independents	1	1	1	1	1			5
Lambie						1		1
Hinch								
Conservatives								
LDP								

Note: All senators are new following a double dissolution, although half will only have three year terms.

Methodology

Between 17 March and 24 March and between 26 April and 5 May 2017 The Australia Institute conducted two national opinion polls, the former of 1,420 people and the latter of 1,408 people, through Research Now, with nationally representative samples by gender, age and state or territory.

Those who were undecided were asked which way they were leaning. These leanings are included in voting intention crosstabs. “LNP” includes separate responses for Liberal and National. “Other” includes Nick Xenophon Team, Australian Conservatives, Jacqui Lambie Network, Liberal Democrats, Derryn Hinch’s Justice Party and Independent/Other.¹

The results of these two polls were averaged for each of Australia’s five largest states, for which there were a statistically significant number of respondents. These were then used to calculate how many Senate quotas each party could achieve, with likely preferences considered for fractions of a quota.

For Tasmania, the ACT and the Northern Territory, voters were assumed to vote as they did in the 2016 federal election.

¹ The Australian Conservatives and Liberal Democrats were included in the May survey only.

Full results

Table 1: Senate voting intention or leaning, March 2017

	Total	Male	Female	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA
Liberal/National Coalition	28%	30%	27%	28%	28%	32%	27%	22%
Labor	32%	33%	31%	33%	34%	26%	41%	33%
Greens	10%	7%	14%	10%	13%	8%	13%	10%
Pauline Hanson's One Nation	13%	14%	12%	11%	11%	20%	13%	12%
Nick Xenophon Team	5%	5%	4%	3%	3%	5%	4%	18%
Jacqui Lambie Network	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Derryn Hinch's Justice Party	2%	2%	2%	2%	4%	1%	0%	2%
Independent/Other	8%	8%	9%	12%	8%	8%	3%	4%

Note: The 14% of respondents who were not sure which party they intend to vote for were classified based on which party they were leaning towards.

Table 2: Senate voting intention or leaning in quotas, March 2017

	Total	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA
Liberal/National Coalition	2.0	1.9	1.9	2.2	1.9	1.5
Labor	2.3	2.3	2.4	1.8	2.8	2.3
Greens	0.7	0.7	0.9	0.6	0.9	0.7
Pauline Hanson's One Nation	0.9	0.8	0.8	1.4	0.9	0.8
Nick Xenophon Team	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	1.2
Jacqui Lambie Network	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Derryn Hinch's Justice Party	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.0	0.1
Independent/Other	0.6	0.9	0.5	0.6	0.2	0.3

Table 3: Senate voting intention or leaning, April–May 2017

	Total	Male	Female	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA
Liberal/National Coalition	32%	33%	30%	32%	32%	35%	29%	24%
Labor	31%	31%	30%	32%	31%	28%	33%	24%
Greens	11%	9%	14%	11%	14%	5%	17%	11%
Pauline Hanson's One Nation	9%	9%	8%	8%	7%	15%	5%	7%
Nick Xenophon Team	4%	5%	3%	4%	2%	3%	3%	24%
Australian Conservatives	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Jacqui Lambie Network	2%	1%	2%	1%	2%	3%	1%	0%
Liberal Democrats	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	0%
Derryn Hinch's Justice Party	2%	2%	2%	1%	4%	1%	0%	0%
Independent/Other	8%	8%	9%	9%	7%	7%	9%	10%

Note: The 12% of respondents who were not sure which party they intend to vote for were classified based on which party they were leaning towards.

Table 4: Senate voting intention or leaning in quotas, April–May 2017

	Total	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA
Liberal/National Coalition	2.2	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.1	1.7
Labor	2.1	2.3	2.2	2.0	2.3	1.7
Greens	0.8	0.7	1.0	0.3	1.2	0.8
Pauline Hanson's One Nation	0.6	0.6	0.5	1.1	0.4	0.5
Nick Xenophon Team	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2	1.7
Australian Conservatives	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1
Jacqui Lambie Network	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.0
Liberal Democrats	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.0
Derryn Hinch's Justice Party	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.0	0.0
Independent/Other	0.6	0.7	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.7