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MORRISON'S MIRACLE: ANALYSING THE 2019 AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL ELECTION

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On the night of the 2019 election, Prime Minister Scott Morrison thanked the 'quiet Australians' for delivering a 'miracle' result, re-electing the Liberal–National Coalition and returning his government to power. Morrison was Australia's first Pentecostal prime minister and an exponent of the prosperity gospel, as well as miracles—redefining the Australian mantra of the 'fair go' as 'a fair go for those who have a go'. Morrison ended his victory speech with the words 'God bless Australia'—probably the first Australian leader to use such words since John Curtin in the depths of the Second World War.

The election result was very much at odds with expectations, given that national opinion polls had long been predicting a Labor win rather than the re-election of the centre-right Coalition. The backdrop was the declining level of trust in politicians and the media. Trust in politicians had reached its lowest level since first measured in Australia in 1969 (Cameron and Wynter 2018) and trust in the media was also at a low point (Edelman 2018). The discourse of 'fake news' was used to discredit news media, although the term was also used to describe disinformation campaigns spread on social media platforms for political purposes (Buckmaster and Wils 2019). Lack of trust and disengagement from

party politics provided fertile ground for populist appeals and negative campaigning, particularly through social media. Labor leaders blamed the influence of populist parties and the cashed-up scare campaign around taxes, particularly the mythical 'death tax', for their defeat. Labor, with its plethora of policy offerings, seemed unable to cut through to disengaged and distrustful voters while simpler negative messaging was more successful.

Populist minor parties on the right, such as Pauline Hanson's One Nation (PHON) and Clive Palmer's United Australia Party (UAP), made extensive use of social media, including platforms such as Facebook. This reflected a global shift whereby radical right parties and organisations were more than matching the left in their use of digital technology. In addition, in 2019, the Liberal Party's social media strategy was more successful than Labor's—for example, gaining more than twice the number of views for its Facebook page. This was unlike the 2013 and 2016 federal elections when Labor and the Greens were notably more active than the Coalition on social media platforms such as Twitter (see Bruns and Moon 2018).

Few seats changed hands, with the governing Coalition gaining one additional seat to give it 77 of the 151 seats in the House of Representatives, while Labor lost one seat. Reflecting the loss of trust in the major parties, the share of the vote going to minor parties and Independents continued to rise in the House of Representatives, although there was a slight dip in their Senate share (from 35.5 per cent in 2016 to 33 per cent in 2019). PHON did particularly well in Queensland and its two Queensland senators will share the balance of power on the crossbench with four other senators when Labor and the Australian Greens oppose the government. The Greens held all their Senate positions, increasing their vote significantly in South Australia and Queensland, while the Labor vote collapsed in Queensland, where it won only one Senate seat. The Nick Xenophon Team (NXT), renamed the Centre Alliance, retained a lower house seat and had two continuing senators. Palmer's UAP ran an expensive campaign but failed to secure a seat; Cory Bernardi's party, the Australian Conservatives, was disbanded soon after the election, with Bernardi continuing to sit as an Independent senator up until his resignation from the Senate in January 2020.

The 'modern' gender gap in the voting characteristics of recent Australian elections continued in 2019, with women voting to the left of men— that is, the 2019 Australian Election Study (AES) showed women were

again more likely than men to vote Labor, more likely to vote Green and significantly less likely than men to vote for the Coalition.[1] The shift of women to the left or, more accurately perhaps, the shift of men to the right, reflects broader social changes, including employed women now having a higher union density than men and taking leadership positions in the trade union movement.

Election themes

Our aim in this chapter is to highlight the key themes of the campaign as they emerged in our election workshop discussions. For many observers, the 2019 federal election appeared to be a watershed, awash as it was with huge amounts of money paying for negative campaign material and contributing to the loss of civility on the campaign trail. The trend to personalisation continued, with the emphasis on leaders or candidates rather than on the parties for which they were standing. At the same time, distrust and disengagement on the part of many voters contributed to the success of negative campaigning targeting leaders and candidates.

Digital technology had broad consequences in terms of the fragmentation of the public sphere and the fact that many voters accessed their political news from echo chambers that confirmed their own views rather than exposing them to a diversity of opinion and debate. Negative campaigning thrives in such echo chambers, in what is often characterised as a 'post-truth' environment, and digital technology gives added emphasis to visual elements such as memes and GIFs and the affect conveyed by visual images. One good example in the 2019 campaign was a photoshopped image of Bill Shorten in the bath posted by PHON with the words 'Bill couldn't run a bath let alone a country'. The intersection between populism, personalisation and digital technology is a major theme of this book, along with its relationship to voter distrust.

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1   A larger proportion of female respondents (37 per cent) than male respondents (33 per cent) indicated that they voted for Labor. Similarly, 15 per cent of female respondents voted for the Greens, compared with 9 per cent of male respondents. This pattern was reversed for the Coalition, with 48 per cent of male respondents voting for the Liberal and National Coalition parties, compared with 38 per cent of women. Data from The Australian National University, *Australian Election Study 2019*, available from: australianelectionstudy.org.

Also contributing to voter distrust has been the laissez-faire attitude of the Australian Government towards the regulation of political finance and the consequent perceived purchase of political access and influence by 'a few big interests' at the expense of the people as a whole. The 2019 federal election campaign will be remembered for the more than $80 million spent by billionaire Clive Palmer—an outlay that delivered preferences for the Coalition but failed to win Palmer's UAP a seat. The role of private money in federal elections makes Australia increasingly out of step with campaign finance regulation in comparable democracies. The cost of paid electronic advertising—banned in many comparable democracies—has driven Australian political parties to chase ever-greater private donations (Sawer 2019). Both political donations and the negative advertising these buy increase distrust in politicians and political parties.

Compounding the distrust stemming from the access bought by political donations are the perceived 'rorts' or abuse of entitlements by politicians, such as charging private or party travel to the public purse. Posts on social media platforms about such rorts quickly go viral, as in the helicopter memes that brought down former Speaker of the House of Representatives Bronwyn Bishop (Sawer and Gauja 2016). Australia differs from comparable democracies not only in its laissez-faire attitude to the role of private money in elections, but also in its attitude to the use of public money, such as parliamentary allowances, for electioneering. Under 2017 legislation, travel by staffers to assist parliamentarians in their re-election, including travel until the day before election day to work at party campaign headquarters, may be considered official business.

Populist discourse feeds on the distrust of democratic representatives or 'career politicians' arising from the perceived abuse of public office. At the same time, populist discourse promotes suspicion of courts and tribunals, dismissing issues of governance and accountability as concerns of the 'Beltway' or the 'Canberra bubble'. In a video released after he became prime minister, Morrison invoked these sentiments when he said: 'The Canberra bubble is what happens down here, when people get all caught up with all sorts of gossip and rubbish, and that's probably why most of you switch off any time you hear a politician talk' (Coorey 2018).

Mobilising resentment of selected elites is a feature of both left-wing populism (directed against the 'big end of town') and the more successful right-wing populism (directed against special interests with supposed contempt for the values of ordinary citizens but a desire to spend their

taxes). The latter form of populist discourse was very successfully wielded by former Prime Minister John Howard (see Sawer and Laycock 2009; Snow and Moffitt 2012). Such populist discourse was deployed relentlessly in the 2019 campaign by the Coalition in social media ads such as: 'Labor can't manage money, so they come after yours.'

The election result, while surprising to most, was perhaps 'overdetermined'—in other words, any one of a number of causes might have been sufficient to account for it. In addition to overly complex policy messages and an unpopular Labor leader, there was the populist discourse feeding off voter distrust, the ubiquitous negative campaigning funded by Palmer and other private donors and the media dominance of Rupert Murdoch's News Corp. Not only is the concentration of media ownership in Australia among the highest in the world, but also the Murdoch mastheads and *Sky News* overwhelmingly campaigned against Labor during the campaign.

While the ubiquitous negative campaigning was seen as a new low in Australian politics, there was at least one positive development: the 2019 election was the first since the 2001 'Tampa' election not to mobilise anti-Islamic fears (Jensen 2019: 44). The closest the Prime Minister came to these previous campaigns was the repeated commitment to 'keeping Australians safe'. Following the massacre of worshippers in two mosques in New Zealand in March, which drew attention to the links between anti-Islamic hate speech and violence, the Coalition eschewed the kind of fear campaign seen in preceding Australian elections. Candidates found to have expressed anti-Islamic views were more or less promptly disendorsed.

The themes of this election had much in common with those dominating recent European elections, including voter distrust, populism and the personalisation of politics. Hence this book brings in comparative perspectives wherever possible, as well as consideration of the type of reforms desirable to boost public confidence in political institutions. The changing techniques of political persuasion are subjected to close examination, as are the methodologies used for public opinion polling and the changing patterns of voter behaviour, including the shift to early voting. Overall, the book provides a comprehensive overview of the actors and campaigns in the 2019 federal election and the rules of the game and contexts in which it took place. The timetable of the election is shown in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 2019 federal election timetable

11 April	Prime Minister announces the election will be held on 18 May Postal vote applications open Writs issued for the House and half-Senate elections
18 April	Electoral rolls close
21 April	'Bulk' (registered political parties) candidate nominations for the House of Representatives close
23 April	Nominations of all candidates close
24 April	Declaration of candidates; draw for positions on the ballots
29 April	Early voting, mobile voting and checks on declaration envelopes commence, but no vote counting until close of voting at 6 pm on 18 May
15 May	Postal vote applications close at 6 pm
18 May	Election day
31 May	All declaration (e.g. postal and absent) votes due
21 June	Writs due; Parliament must sit within 30 days

Source: AEC (2019).

The continuing tradition

As noted in the 2016 federal election book, *Double Disillusion*, Australian political scientists have produced election books or special issues of journals analysing federal election campaigns since 1958. This is the 17th of such volumes—a series supported since the 1996 election by the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia (ASSA). After each election there is an academy-sponsored workshop identifying the key themes of the campaign as well as focusing on patterns of voter behaviour, the campaign strategies of political parties and third parties, the performance of the opinion polls, ideological contests and the role of the media. The current volume brings together 36 contributors, ranging from established to early career scholars, and has benefited from commentary by the political journalists and practitioners present at the federal election workshop.

To address the themes of voter distrust, personalisation, populism and digital disruption and to explain the result, this volume is divided into four parts:

1. The context, covering the rules of the game, the campaign, candidates and preselection, ideology and leadership, marginal seat polling and the national polls.

2. The results in the House, Senate, the States and Territories, and electoral behaviour.
3. The actors, including the political parties and third parties.
4. The media, including the traditional media, campaign communications and the visual campaign.

The first part of the book examines the campaign and its context, beginning with an overview by Marian Simms. Simms argues that Morrison inherited a party room dogged by instability, ideological divisions and personal rivalries and his task was to show that the 'uncertainty' in the Coalition was over. Morrison's subsequent presentation of himself as a political outsider—an 'accidental' leader—was an example of personalised politics, as was Bill Shorten's injection of family stories and personal questions to the audience. This personalised and charismatic style may be used by mainstream parties to compete with the smaller populist parties and Independents.

Simms suggests that, due to a number of factors, the campaign is not restricted to the period between the announcement of the election and election day. These factors include the advent of the continuous campaign (accelerated by social media), Australia's short election cycles (especially with State electoral matters bleeding into federal politics) and the politicisation of the federal Budget. Hence the chapter covers the campaign context: the 'long campaign', from about November 2018 to Budget week starting on 1 April 2019; and the 'real' campaign, from Budget day on 2 April through to polling day.

Simms shows that, alongside his personal style, Morrison managed to deliver a carefully crafted and highly focused campaign, based largely on the economy. He was bland about policies but sharp in his criticisms of the track record and plans of the Australian Labor Party (ALP). In stark contrast, Labor had been crafting policies since before the 2016 federal election under a broad redistributive agenda, which it said contrasted with the Coalition's plans to support the big end of town. Arguably, Labor's strategy of attacking the Liberals as representing corporate Australia failed miserably against Morrison's persona and his statements and activities with regard to congestion-busting/drought-breaking.

In the next chapter, 'The rules of the game', Marian Sawer and Michael Maley set out the ways in which the regulatory regime for federal elections has improved and the ways it has fallen behind best practice in comparable

democracies. Enrolment practice has finally been modernised, so the electoral roll is more comprehensive than ever; previous resistance to making enrolment easier has faded. Less positive is the continuing lack of restrictions on campaign expenditure at the federal level and the further liberalisation of the use of parliamentary resources for electioneering. The lack of any 'truth in political advertising' provision at the federal level became the subject of debate with the prevalence of misleading and deceptive claims—in particular, concerning Labor's tax policy. The shift to social media, however, meant any attempt to regulate content was even more challenging. Notable in 2019 was the continued rise in early voting—an unforeseen consequence of much earlier changes to the *Commonwealth Electoral Act*. Just over 40 per cent of electors voted before polling day, including a significant number before the major parties held their campaign launches. This raised both deliberative concerns and concerns over a level playing field, considering the resources needed to have a presence at pre-polling centres for a three-week polling period.

In Chapter 4, 'Candidates and preselection ', Anika Gauja and Marija Taflaga argue that, while candidate selection is an extremely important process in determining the representativeness of the Australian Parliament, it is one in which relatively few people participate, being largely dominated by executives and factions and shrouded in secrecy. Using an original dataset created for the chapter, they show that, for the 2019 federal election, only a handful of preselection contests was actually competitive and the majority received no media coverage. Gauja and Taflaga document the most controversial contests and analyse the impact of gender. They show that, in 2019, only 34 per cent of those who stood for party preselection were women. Overall, a higher percentage of women candidates was elected to the Senate than to the House of Representatives, but the overall composition of both houses is still heavily determined by the fact that the majority of incumbent parliamentarians are men.

In 'Ideology and populism' (Chapter 5), Carol Johnson sees the 2019 election as distinctive in presenting voters with a clear ideological choice between, on the one hand, a well-developed policy agenda to address stagnating wages and rising inequalities and, on the other, neoliberal opposition to such tax-and-spend policies (albeit in a form that emphasised a 'fair go' for ordinary Australians). While there might have been this choice, Labor did not succeed in communicating it effectively and its own past policies of economic deregulation and dismantling centralised wage-fixing may have reduced trust in its capacity to deliver.

In 2019, Labor engaged in populist discourse against 'the big end of town' in particular. The Morrison team also engaged in populist discourse, mobilising the people against big government and the spending of their money ('I don't think the Government knows better than you do about where your money should go'). The emphasis was on attacking Labor and Johnson suggests the Coalition was increasingly aware of the difficulty of selling a more explicitly neoliberal agenda of its own. Morrison himself combined neoliberal ideological beliefs and the compatible Pentecostal 'prosperity gospel'.

Paul Strangio and James Walter argue in Chapter 6, 'The personalisation of the campaign', that the personalisation of the election contest was both a continuation of previous trends and the deliberate crafting of personae by the leaders—notably, Scott Morrison. Strangio and Walter show how Morrison was able to emerge from relative obscurity—a political unknown—to appear as a well-liked ordinary bloke (see also Kelly 2018). Shorten, in contrast, was well-known for his long track record as ALP leader and a senior minister before that. Somehow, Shorten's experience became a liability, especially given the perception of his history in unseating previous leaders and engaging in dubious union deals. The authors conclude Shorten was no Bob Hawke, resembling more the hapless Bill Hayden, who stood aside to enable Hawke's leadership in 1983.

In Chapter 7, 'National polling and other disasters', Luke Mansillo and Simon Jackman examine the failure of the national polls conducted before the election to anticipate the result. The national polls—which had been reasonably accurate predictors of election outcomes in recent years—powerfully shaped expectations among the public, journalists and politicians themselves that Labor would win the election. Mansillo and Jackman fit a 'state-space model' to the public opinion polls fielded between the 2016 and 2019 federal elections, identifying the estimated trajectory of voting intentions between the two elections, house effects (biases specific to each polling organisation) and the discontinuity in public opinion associated with the transition from Malcolm Turnbull to Morrison as prime minister in August 2018. Polling error in 2019 was largely associated with underestimating Coalition support, while overestimating support for minor parties, especially on the part of YouGov Australia. Some of this polling error could have been anticipated given the observed biases in polls fielded before the 2016 federal election (Jackman and Mansillo 2018), but most of the 2016–19 error was new. What was especially striking about the polling errors in 2019 was that: a) errors

in estimates of first preferences did not 'wash out' when converted to two-party-preferred estimates, such that b) the resulting errors in the two-party-preferred estimates were large by historical standards, and c) they led to an incorrect prediction as to which party would form government, at which point larger-than-typical 'poll error' became a fully fledged crisis of confidence in polls and the polling industry. The chapter identifies pollster malpractice through 'herding'; published polls during the campaign period were far too close, suggesting adjustment of weighting procedures to match estimates from rival polling organisations.

In 'The perilous polling of single seats' (Chapter 8), Murray Goot forensically examines the opinion surveys undertaken in individual seats and, more often, in groups of seats. He discusses the decline in the number of such polls compared with previous elections and their methodological limitations and lack of transparency. Notably, not all single-seat polls are in the 'marginals' and may be undertaken for other reasons. For example, while the federal seat of Deakin was not marginal, it was considered potentially winnable by the ALP due to the anti-Liberal swing in the equivalent Victorian State seats. Goot notes that 'provincial' seats were overpolled compared with both rural and metropolitan ones. These polls overestimated both the ALP primary vote and the UAP primary vote. More worrying were the conflict-of-interest issues whereby a single company undertook polling for different clients who assumed the results were confirmatory rather than duplicated! Goot's chapter raises issues of 'trust' in both single-seat and national polls.

The second part of the book analyses the results of the 2019 federal election. This is done across four chapters, with chapters presenting a detailed breakdown of the House of Representatives and Senate results, a chapter analysing regional variations in the campaign and another chapter that explores patterns of individual voter behaviour. Such a multifaceted analysis is necessary to fully understand the complexity of Australian federal elections, which comprise two discrete elections using different voting systems—one for the House of Representatives and one for the Senate.[2] It is also necessary to understand the role and importance of regions in Australia's federated democracy and to appreciate the dynamics of class, age and ethnicity that underlie patterns of voting.

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2   State senators have six-year terms, while House of Representatives terms are three years; typically, a House election coincides with a so-called half-Senate election.

In Chapter 9, Ben Raue presents the results of the House of Representatives vote, highlights the key contests in each of the States and Territories and explains the electoral redistributions and by-elections that took place during the previous parliamentary term. Raue reports that the primary vote for minor parties in the House in 2019 increased to a historic high of 25.2 per cent, and preferences (particularly those for Palmer's UAP and PHON) played an important role in the outcome of the election. The 2019 election was also notable for the growth in postal and pre-poll voting, which favoured the Coalition, and the gap in the two-party-preferred vote between those who voted early and those who voted on election day was wider than in the preceding six elections.

Reporting the results of the Senate contest, Antony Green analyses the impact of changes to the Senate voting system that were designed to make voting more transparent and proportionate by abolishing group voting tickets. The number of groups and candidates contesting the election fell compared with the previous half-Senate election in 2013. The new system also produced a result that achieved what it was intended to do: to favour political parties with a substantial vote before the allocation of preferences and to make it much more difficult for parties to be elected on the basis of preference deals.

The 2019 election was notable for the variation in electoral support for the Coalition and Labor among the Australian States, Territories and regions. In Chapter 11, Nick Economou, Zareh Ghazarian, Narelle Miragliotta, Will Sanders, Rodney Smith, John Warhurst and Paul Williams briefly analyse the campaign in the States and Territories. They discuss previous State and Territory election results, economic conditions, specific policy promises and campaign visits from the major party leaders. They highlight key contests and analyse notable regional variations within each jurisdiction.

In Chapter 12, on voter behaviour, Shaun Ratcliff, Jill Sheppard and Juliet Pietsch examine the impact of age, economic status and ethnicity on how Australians vote. Using new data from the Cooperative Australian Election Survey, they show that higher-income homeowners supported the Coalition, whereas lower-income renters voted for Labor. They argue that Labor's policy on housing affordability and inequity was an electoral liability; while support was concentrated among Labor voters, opposition was diffuse. The authors show that ethnic minorities did not favour the Coalition, nor did their views on same-sex marriage push them to vote for the Coalition parties in the election.

The third part of the book turns to the role of party actors and Independents in the campaign as well as third parties. In Chapter 14, Nicholas Barry explores continuities in the Liberal campaign such as the discursive strategy of identifying Labor with class warfare but also new elements such as the party's social media strategy, which was much more successful than in 2016. He describes Morrison as a 'conservative' who successfully brought together conservatives, moderates and former Turnbull supporters. He also examines the Liberal Party's 'women problem': its failure to put more women into parliament, their treatment while in parliament and the parallels with the underrepresentation of women in conservative parties in Europe and elsewhere. Meanwhile, the rural-based Coalition partner, the National Party, more than held its own despite the diminished rurality of its electorates, a leadership scandal, mismanagement of water allocations in the Murray–Darling Basin and the conflicting interests of miners and farmers elsewhere. Geoff Cockfield notes that among the policy dilemmas confronting the Nationals is that of migration, where the traditional social conservatism of the party has to be balanced with regional demands for labour for agricultural industries.

The hollowing out of support for centre-left parties across Europe forms the backdrop of Rob Manwaring's analysis of the structural factors affecting Labor, including the erosion of its support base in the unions. He also compares Labor and Coalition policies, noting how the relatively policy-rich offerings of Labor failed to gain traction compared with the concentrated negative message of the Coalition's campaign. It was a different story for the Greens, who were surging across Europe in the May elections for the European Parliament but making only relatively small gains in Australia. In Chapter 16, Stewart Jackson explores why climate change did not become—as expected—a key focus of the election. He finds a number of reasons: internal party problems, particularly in Victoria; the presidential-style campaign waged by Morrison against Shorten, which became the focus of attention; and the fact the Greens campaigned on a range of issues, not just climate change.

Minor populist parties on the right—such as PHON and Clive Palmer's UAP, Katter's Australian Party (KAP) and the Jacqui Lambie Network (JLN)—were catching up with the Greens in the scale of their social media and digital campaigning, which is something closely analysed by Glenn Kefford in Chapter 17. Electors continued to vote for a wide range of minor parties and Independents, with their choice depending

on the State or region in which they lived. There was no evidence of any significant return to historical patterns of strong identification with the major parties.

The exploration by Jennifer Curtin and Jill Sheppard of the Independents' campaigns again highlights the disaffection with the major parties and the search for alternatives. In the rural Victorian seat of Indi, there was a unique community-based process to replace retiring Independent, Cathy McGowan. 'Voices of Indi' volunteers determined a succession process through which Helen Haines was chosen as preferred candidate and became the first Independent to succeed another in a federal electorate. Meanwhile in Warringah, Independent Zali Steggall was successful in defeating former prime minister Tony Abbott. The authors place her among a new group of socially progressive but economically conservative women Independents, alienated by the Liberal Party's lack of attention to climate policy and failure to develop a culture more inclusive of women. One such woman, Dr Kerryn Phelps, was unsuccessful in retaining the usually safe Liberal seat of Wentworth, which she had managed to win in a 2018 by-election.

Whereas unions were high-profile actors in the 2019 election, business was not, and is described by John Wanna in Chapter 19 as 'missing in action'. The slack, however, was taken up by business-oriented commentators— some from third parties and others from the media, including *Sky News* commentator and former Liberal Party adviser Chris Kenny. Big business was not active in the campaign, in contrast to preceding federal elections, and in some instances was supportive of ALP policy positions such as reviewing the level of payments of the Newstart allowance for the unemployed. Advertising and campaigning were conducted by other peak councils, such as the Australian Property Council and Master Builders Australia, which joined the chorus of opposition to the ALP's plans to abolish negative gearing and capital gains tax discounts.

In Chapter 20, Andrew Scott examines the role of a range of specific unions in the policy debates and advertising campaigns. The peak union body, the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU), did not reach the highwater mark achieved in its 2007 election campaign, when it helped unseat then Prime Minister John Howard over his 'WorkChoices' industrial relations legislation.

In 2019, a number of feminised unions—in industries with a predominantly female workforce—ran strong campaigns. Scott discusses grassroots and advertising campaigns by nurses' and teachers' unions. The ACTU and the Victorian Trades Hall Council—the latter emboldened by the pro-Labor swing in the 2018 State election—undertook surveys and campaigns in targeted seats. Mining and energy interests effectively created a wedge between parts of the union movement and the ALP, so there were no united voices over big election issues such as the proposed Adani coalmine in central Queensland.

In Chapter 21, on third parties and think tanks, Ebony Bennett argues that activist group GetUp! used the same strategy it had used in 2016 but with limited success. It targeted 'right-wing blockers' in seven seats and campaigned in a further 22. Its main success was in the seat of Warringah, which saw the defeat of Abbott; small swings were achieved elsewhere. GetUp! itself also became a target, was forced to withdraw a tasteless advertisement, and was accused of bullying and harassment by Liberal candidate (now MP) Nicolle Flint.

A conservative counterpart, Advance Australia (AA), was formed in late 2018 and worked in the targeted seats of Warringah, Mayo, Indi and Flinders. AA's memorable 'Captain GetUp' was possibly more effective at promoting GetUp! than opposing it. Bennett also analyses the policy contributions of the think tanks The Australia Institute and the conservative Institute of Public Affairs (IPA).

The fourth part of the book examines the role of the media in the campaign, ranging from traditional print media to YouTube videos. In Chapter 22, Andrea Carson and Lawrie Zion find that the front-page emphasis on tax increases and Labor spending supported the Coalition's campaign narrative, particularly in the Murdoch mastheads and the *Australian Financial Review*. The Murdoch-owned *Sky News* also reinforced negative messages about Labor (and positive messages about PHON). The Coalition's social media strategy—particularly its use of video posts— was notably more successful than Labor's, attracting more than twice as many Facebook viewers. Social media also provided a platform enabling third parties and other actors, as well as the Coalition, to spread a fear campaign falsely claiming that Labor would introduce a 'death tax'.

In Chapter 23, Stephen Mills compares Liberal and Labor campaign communications strategies, finding that Labor adopted a 'challenger-style, policy-centred strategy incorporating a largely positive and broad-based

message of change'. The Liberals, by contrast, adopted a largely negative incumbency-style strategy, policy-free and focused on leadership. This resulted in a campaign fought over the Opposition's policy rather than the record of the Coalition Government. Mills analyses how these campaign strategies were implemented—in particular, the flaws in Labor's campaign advertising compared with the simpler and more effective Liberal ads, including one in which a framed family photo is being squeezed in a rusty old vice called Labor. The pun used elsewhere was also effective: 'Labor: The Bill Australia can't afford.' Both parties had separate teams organised to deliver such messages through news media, electronic advertising and digital media, and Labor also had a separate team for direct voter contact (doorknocking and phone banks)—something into which the Coalition has traditionally put less effort. Despite Labor (and ACTU) experience with such fieldwork and its increased scale in 2019, it was relatively unsuccessful compared with the determined and highly negative incumbency campaign.

The visual elements in campaigning are of increasing importance and Lucien Leon analyses the contrasting functions of memes—familiar images transmitted with brief witty captions—in Chapter 24. While memes are often called the new political cartoons, they are also the form increasingly taken by everyday political engagement. However, they can be weaponised by political parties and have the capacity to polarise and misinform the electorate as they go viral. The intervention of political players had consolidated since 2016 and most of the memes featured in mainstream news media came from six Facebook groups, including Clive Palmer's Put Australia First, Australian Young Greens and Labor and Liberal–oriented groups. The memes circulating during the campaign focused on tax, the economy, climate change, Liberal leadership and distrust of Bill Shorten, and Leon argues they provided a reliable gauge of the electoral mood. A selection of memes, cartoons and videos is included in this chapter, illustrating responses to the campaign by political cartoonists, partisan players and engaged citizens.

Aftermath: Morrison's mandate

Bill Shorten's resignation from the ALP leadership on election night created speculation over his replacement; in the event, Anthony Albanese was the sole candidate when the nominations closed, and the three other leadership positions were also uncontested, with much behind-the-scenes

discussion. The new ALP team comprised Anthony Albanese (NSW) as Leader, Richard Marles (Victoria) as Deputy Leader, Penny Wong (South Australia) as Senate Leader and Kristina Keneally (NSW) as Deputy Senate Leader. Shorten opted to remain an MP and is a member of Albanese's Shadow Cabinet, which comprises 12 women and 12 men.

Morrison's new ministry was sworn in on 29 May, with a mix of existing ministers and others in new roles—notably, Ken Wyatt as the first Aboriginal Minister for Indigenous Australians and Senator Bridget McKenzie as the first woman Minister for Agriculture. McKenzie did not last long in this position. She resigned in February 2020 and returned to the backbench after she was found to have breached the Statement of Ministerial Standards for her involvement in the sports grants scandal (Coorey 2020).

Ministers Josh Frydenberg (Treasurer) and Mathias Cormann (Senate Leader and Minister for Finance) would be responsible for delivering the Coalition tax cuts that passed the Senate on 4 July. While the delivery of personal tax cuts was Morrison's core promise, arguably his 'mandate' was open-ended.

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