



Predictions for elections around the voting globe

Many English speaking nations go to the polls this year, **MALCOLM MACKERRAS** writes

Readers may be interested in my political predictions for the years 2012 and 2013. In my academic research my main interests are elections in the countries of the Anglosphere. I confine myself to that topic today.

However, four of those countries have had their general elections fairly recently so nothing is likely to come up in either 2012 or in 2013.

In Britain, Canada and New Zealand lower house general elections occurred in May 2010, May 2011 and November 2011, respectively. In Britain and in Canada the lower house is called the House of Commons and in practice the term is four or five years. In New Zealand the term is three years.

In Ireland parliamentary elections (for the Dail) took place in February 2011. There was also an Irish presidential election in October last year. So, apart from the occasional by-election, nothing will come up in the above four countries in either 2012 or 2013.

That leaves Australia and the United States of America. In Australia I stick by my long-standing predictions federally. The next election will be for the House of Representatives and half the Senate and it will occur on October 26, 2013. Going into that election as prime minister will be Julia Gillard. The Leader of the Opposition will be Tony Abbott.

Post-election I give Abbott an 80 per cent chance to become prime minister. That leaves Gillard with a 20 per cent chance to remain as prime minister, having then won two elections, in August 2010 and in October 2013.

On March 9, 2013 there will be a general election in Western Australia. The Coalition Government led by Colin Barnett will win easily.

Now back to 2012. Although any federal election is very unlikely this year, one point should be noted. If

there were to be a successful vote of no-confidence the election would be for the House of Representatives only.

That would throw the elections for the House of Representatives and half the Senate out of kilter. They could, however, then be brought back into kilter by yet another early election. By that I mean there could be a House of Representatives plus half-Senate election in May 2014.

However, following any successful no-confidence motion and House-only election Abbott would be a near-certainty to be prime minister. That would create another near-certainty, a double dissolution. That would have the effect of keeping the elections out of kilter.

The most recent Queensland election took place on March 21, 2009. The result was 51 seats for Labor, 34 for the Liberal National Party and four independents, in a Legislative Assembly of 89 seats. My prediction for the March 24, 2012 election is 63 for the LNP, 18 for Labor and a cross-bench of eight members, being four for Katter's Australian Party and four independents.

The most recent Northern Territory election took place on August 9, 2008 and the result was 13 seats for Labor, 11 for the Country Liberal Party and one independent, in a Legislative Assembly of 25 members. My prediction for the August 25, 2012 election is 14 for the CLP, 10 for Labor and one independent.

The most recent ACT election took place on October 18, 2008 and the result was seven seats for Labor, six for the Liberals and four for the Greens, in a Legislative Assembly of 17 members. My prediction for the October 20, 2012 election is eight seats for the Liberals, seven for Labor and two for the Greens.

Now to the United States and I had first better explain what I mean by

the term "November-December 2008 presidential election." The American people went to the polls on Tuesday, November 4, of that year. However, the President was actually elected on Monday, December 22, in the electoral college.

The result in November-December 2008 was 365 for Barack Obama and 173 for the Republican candidate, John McCain.

However, there was a census in 2010 and that changed the entitlements in 18 of the 50 states. For example, Texas (carried by McCain) had 34 electors in 2008 but will have 38 this year. By contrast the Obama-voting states of New York and Ohio had 31 and 20 electors, respectively, in 2008. This year they will have 29 and 18. So the notional result in 2008 is 359 for Obama and 179 for McCain. I predict the result this year will be exactly the same except that Ohio (18 electors), North Carolina (15) and Indiana (11) will switch from Obama to Romney. Consequently I am predicting 315 votes for Obama and 223 for Romney.

On November 6 there will also be Senate elections in two-thirds of the states and a general election for all 435 members of the House of Representatives. New senators and members take their seats in January next year.

At present the Senate has 47 Republicans and 53 Democrats while the House has 242 Republicans and 193 Democrats.

When they take their seats in January I predict the Senate will have 52 Republicans and 48 Democrats while the House will have 224 Republicans and 211 Democrats.

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