

1: Four reasons why Australian politics is so crazy - BBC News

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Thursday, February 19, Train reading: I was updated later, but my copy is the earlier version. A little later I made a passing reference to the post, mainly to challenge the idea that real change was no longer possible. In my view it is. What has changed is the way people go about it. While I read the book at the time it was published, I thought that it would be interesting to look back and especially at the then survey results and subsequent analysis. I am only part way through the book, but I thought that I would make two brief observations now. The first is that among the less party connected swinging voters, there seemed to be a view that you could switch your vote without too much risk because both of the main sides operated within a common framework despite the sometimes political rhetoric. Call it not too many surprises. We respond as a consequence. However, I think that there is a broader factor as well, what I have called the dreaded policy instability. In our personal budgets and planning, we all depend on a degree of stability. Back in the sixties, likely changes were relatively limited. Now in a world of constant changes at the margin with continuous re-packaging, there is no certainty. The second thing that struck me was the sophistication about the role of elections, a sophistication now perhaps lacking. One big school saw elections as a two-way feedback loop. The parties took their policies to the electorate to test and refine. As the campaign proceeded, they modified and indeed introduced new approaches based on what they learned. Looking at it in this way, it was a continuous change process at party and candidate level. Is that true today? The only thing that changes is the campaign packaging, while the capacity of local candidates to actually develop new ideas tailored to electoral circumstance is severely constrained. Of course, there were always practical limitations. But, speaking as a past pre-selection candidate and party organiser, the thought that I must stay on a centrally imposed message regardless of circumstances would have seemed very alien. My job was to win the seat, to help us represent the voters in that seat. I am not saying anything profound here. I just want to connect these two observations in a slightly different way. In discussion, commenters often comment on the end of the old Deakinite social contract. In discussion, commenters complain about poll driven policy. But when you look at the changing rhetoric surrounding elections with its emphasis on mandates and shopping list promises, something a little different emerges. Since people can no longer rely on Governments not to change things, to even provide stability in daily life in the little things, election campaigns have become something akin to contractual negotiations between tightly organised political forces on one side, the electorate on the other. Mr Key promises stability. This does not mean no change. Rather, it seems to have these elements to it. Then, if we are wrong, you can turf us out at the next election. It left us all struggling to understand, to adjust, to work out what to do. It was just too much to absorb. The back benchers who rebelled were not the party professionals nor the ideologues, but the more traditional electorate focused members dealing with the on-ground effects in their electorates. It would be nice if they tried. I quote from the story: Not now, not ever. He was up to no good on his own admission," he said. To my mind, that response in the first two paras is without moral content. It is a statement that effectively mandates the most extreme actions so long as they are intended to protect the country. Could Mr Abbott have made his intended point in a different way? I believe that he could. He could have said something like this: The Australian Government does not intend to apologise to Mr Hicks. Mr Hicks was dealt with under the US legal system, a system that has now quashed his conviction. Our primary concern was the protection of Australia and Australians in the face of a terrorist threat. It is time for us to put this matter behind us. No apology, If it were factually true, he might add something like this. Now we have Mr Abbott stating a categorical position that frankly terrifies the living daylight out of me.

2: - Stability and Change in Australian Politics by Don Aitkin

The first edition of Stability and Change in Australian Politics was a landmark in the serious study of Australian politics. In this second edition Professor Aitkin assembles the results of a new survey carried out in which sought to discover what had been the effects of the Whitlam years and their aftermath on the political behaviour of Australians.

In Australia will review its climate policies, and the process is not off to a good start. He then wisely went to Antarctica. After its day in the sun, Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull swiftly backtracked in part due to pressure from conservatives within the Coalition. By allowing a small group of politicians to take the most cost-effective policy off the table at the outset, Turnbull has made the coming year s that much harder to manage. At the same time, the government will begin its climate policy review. Unless the political circumstances change dramatically, the review will conclude by the end of this year. Every step of the way will see protests, media stunts, hostile leaking and lobbying “ public and private ” by big actors. Climate and energy will consume the national news agenda, which will leave voters and viewers exhausted. The terms of reference state that the review will look into: That there is nothing in this about an expanded and lengthened Renewable Energy Target will mean nothing to groups who want it discussed. What can the government actually achieve now? Now the government has ruled out the most promising policy option, who will be willing to lead the hamstrung review? And what is left on the policy table? There are a couple of options: But asides from not making environmentalists particularly happy, these will not resolve the questions of grid security and energy pricing, both of which have the potential to cause political and economic mayhem. Business is fuming and some odd coalitions are forming. The worst possible outcome for business “ a patchwork of state laws causing more work and less profit ” is a distinct possibility. Meanwhile, the gas industry has had its beady eye on electricity generation for well over a decade. It wants some sort of emissions trading scheme badly, so it can be in pole position as lots of coal-fired plants are closing soon. The question of reservation policy “ hated by many ” may attract some strange allies. The environmental movement will struggle over this. They are still bruised over the Rudd and Gillard policy battles, and an emissions intensity scheme is numbingly technical. In her excellent PhD thesis at the University of New South Wales, Rebecca Pearse argued that many activists have moved on to either supporting community-based renewables or contesting fossil-fuel infrastructure projects. All have argued that Australia should do much less on climate change. It will be interesting to see if the attacks that have happened to other scientists involved in climate and energy happen to him. Expect to see reactions to that. The next big international negotiations , chaired by Fiji but hosted by Germany, will take place in November Will the US pull out of the entire climate convention? Or will Trump settle for just sending the office junior to the negotiations, while gutting his Environmental Protection Authority? Nobody knows, probably not even the president-elect himself. It ought to be remembered that there is nothing more difficult to take in hand, more perilous to conduct, or more uncertain in its success, than to take the lead in the introduction of a new order of things. This is going to be bloody.

3: Australian Election Study

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New Zealand Thank goodness the Australian one day cricket team carved up the New Zealanders with a whitewash of the black caps. In the week our school children slipped down the global ratings and our economy recorded a rare decline, the New Zealanders could quickly point to a budget surplus with more to come. And if I had talked leadership, that too could have become messy. Because as it stands, there has been just one change of government so far this century and two prime ministers here in New Zealand. And as it stands, our current leader is not exactly on rock-solid ground. And at the same time, he managed to make hard decisions such as selling off state-owned companies, raising the GST and cutting tariffs. So why the difference? The obvious answer is the economy. Revenue from the sales of state assets was reinvested in a deregulated market which saw investment and exports climb. There was luck too as the New Zealand economy could readily supply the increasingly wealthy Asian nations with their demand for protein in the form of meat and dairy products. But another important element was the stability and continuity that static political environment creates. There is no doubt there would be little appetite in New Zealand for an Australian-style senate to complicate straight line rule. A mood of cooperation not seen in Australia Photo: Yes, there are adversarial debates, and some personal attacks, but by and large the mood appears to be one of cooperation and trying to get the best deal for the nation, despite political colours. Bill English is the definition of a safe pair of hands and his appointment will likely cause few ripples in New Zealand or around the globe. Sense of political contentment in NZ Pete Monk is the business manager at Ata Rangi wines in the beautiful Martinborough region an hour or so outside Wellington. He says building their exports to more than 30 countries has meant painstaking work over many years. Political stability with consistent messages has been vital to that success. And there is a spin-off benefit as the wines attract more overseas visitors to the cellar door. John Key is not stepping down because his popularity was flagging, or the economy failing, but because after all those years on top he could not face another term, writes Philip Williams. And in a place where people confidently expect their lives will improve, that the economy will continue to grow. As I wandered around a vegetable market in a Wellington suburb, I tried to engage people on the imminent change of prime minister, the economy, the overall state of the nation. There were discussions, but no-one was grumbling. No diatribe about lazy, dishonest politicians or journalists for that matter. People seemed pretty content. There are divisive issues such as the rising cost of housing and the not-unrelated lift in homelessness. But talk politics or economics and most people seem distracted. The only thing that literally had people rattled was the recent earthquake that damaged a number of buildings in the capital. And while we can trust the ground on which we stand, there seems no end to the political shifts and shakes in Canberra. First posted December 11,

4: Australian climate politics in a guide for the perplexed

- *Stability and Change in Australian Politics* by Don Aitkin ISBN Unknown; New York: St. Martin's Press, ;

The Parliament of Australia, also known as the Commonwealth Parliament or Federal Parliament, is the legislative branch of the government of Australia. It is bicameral, and has been influenced both by the Westminster system and United States federalism. Under Section 1 of the Constitution of Australia, Parliament consists of three components: Voting within each electorate utilizes the instant-runoff system of preferential voting, which has its origins in Australia. The party or coalition of parties which commands the confidence of a majority of members of the House of Representatives forms government. The six states return twelve senators each, and the two mainland territories return two senators each, elected through the single transferable voting system. Senators are elected for flexible terms not exceeding six years, with half of the senators contesting at each federal election. The Senate is afforded substantial powers by the Australian Constitution, significantly greater than those of Westminster upper houses such as those of the United Kingdom and Canada, and has the power to block legislation originating in the House as well as supply or monetary bills. As such, the Senate has the power to bring down the government, as occurred during the Australian constitutional crisis. Because legislation must pass successfully through both houses to become law, it is possible for disagreements between the House of Representatives and the Senate to hold up the progress of government bills indefinitely. Such deadlocks are resolved under section 57 of the Constitution, under a procedure called a double dissolution election. Such elections are rare, not because the conditions for holding them are seldom met, but because they can pose a significant political risk to any government that chooses to call one. Of the six double dissolution elections that have been held since federation, half have resulted in the fall of a government. Only once, in 1977, has the full procedure for resolving a deadlock been followed, with a joint sitting of the two houses being held to deliberate upon the bills that had originally led to the deadlock. The most recent double dissolution election was on 2 July 2015, which resulted in the government of the day retaining a one-seat majority in the House of Representatives. The two pieces of legislation that triggered the election did not figure prominently in the eight-week election campaign. Executive[edit] This section needs to be updated. Please update this article to reflect recent events or newly available information. August Main articles: The role of head of state in Australia is divided between two people: The functions and roles of the Governor-General include appointing ambassadors, ministers, and judges, giving Royal Assent to legislation also a role of the monarch, issuing writs for elections and bestowing honours. These posts are held under the authority of the Australian Constitution. In practice, barring exceptional circumstances, the Governor-General exercises these powers only on the advice of the Prime Minister. As such, the role of Governor-General is often described as a largely ceremonial position. The office of Prime Minister is, in practice, the most powerful political office in Australia. Despite being at the apex of executive government in the country, the office is not mentioned in the Constitution of Australia specifically and exists through an unwritten political convention. Barring exceptional circumstances, the prime minister is always the leader of the political party or coalition with majority support in the House of Representatives. The only case where a senator was appointed prime minister was that of John Gorton, who subsequently resigned his Senate position and was elected as a member of the House of Representatives Senator George Pearce was acting prime minister for seven months in 1965 while Billy Hughes was overseas. The strictly private Cabinet meetings occur once a week to discuss vital issues and formulate policy. Outside of the cabinet there are a number of junior ministers, responsible for a specific policy area and reporting directly to any senior Cabinet minister. The Constitution of Australia does not recognise the Cabinet as a legal entity, and its decisions have no legal force. All members of the ministry are also members of the Executive Council, a body which is "in theory, though rarely in practice" chaired by the Governor-General, and which meets solely to endorse and give legal force to decisions already made by the Cabinet. For this reason, there is always a member of the ministry holding the title Vice-President of the Executive Council. Reflecting the influence of the Westminster system, Ministers are selected from elected members of Parliament. Individual ministers who cannot undertake the

public defence of government actions are expected to resign. Such resignations are rare; and the rarity also of public disclosure of splits within cabinet reflects the seriousness with which internal party loyalty is regarded in Australian politics. Judiciary of Australia and Australian court hierarchy High Court building, view from the lake The High Court of Australia is the supreme court in the Australian court hierarchy and the final court of appeal in Australia. It has both original and appellate jurisdiction, has the power of judicial review over laws passed by the Parliament of Australia and the parliaments of the States , and interprets the Constitution of Australia. The High Court is mandated by section 71 of the Constitution, which vests in it the judicial power of the Commonwealth of Australia. The High Court is composed of seven Justices: Susan Kiefel AC , and six other Justices. The state supreme courts are also considered to be superior courts, those with unlimited jurisdiction to hear disputes and which are the pinnacle of the court hierarchy within their jurisdictions. Appeals may be made from state supreme courts to the High Court of Australia. Inferior Courts are secondary to Superior Courts. Their existence stems from legislation and they only have the power to decide on matters which Parliament has granted them. Decisions in inferior courts can be appealed to the Superior Court in that area, and then to the High Court of Australia.

5: - Stability and Change in Australian Politics by Don Aitkin - www.enganchecubano.com -

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By Mike Steketee Posted October 09, In federal politics, four-year terms of parliament have always been the bridesmaid but never the bride. Australian Electoral Commission - Alice Springs Ever since there have been calls for four-year parliamentary terms. And with our recent revolving door of prime ministers it might be time to revisit the plan and consider the flow-on benefits it could have, writes Mike Steketee. Eager to hit the ground running and concerned more with politics than good policy, the new minister announces new projects that are barely thought bubbles. What a great idea. Increasing the time between elections to four or five years would help. Even the present three-year term is a misnomer, given that the average time between federal elections in Australia since federation has been about two-and-a-half years. That gives a government time to do some governing in the first year before it starts thinking about how to win another election in the next 18 months. There is no better example than the Abbott government, which came to power with a big majority, introduced a tough budget meant to bring down the deficit and which, by the time of its second budget, was running scared and reversed course. Admittedly this is an extreme case, given how comprehensively its first budget misconceived the politics by breaking multiple election promises, imposing the harshest cuts on those least well-off and offending every fundamental notion of fairness. But an extra year or 18 months would have enabled a more considered approach, rather than one that has put the long-term task of budget repair further behind. As well, it would have given Tony Abbott more breathing space before the nervous nellys in the party room started getting desperate about holding on to their seats. Recent prime ministers and opposition leaders have supported them. Most voters are more than happy to have less politics and fewer elections. But the idea has never quite made it to the political altar. It is a metaphor for the difficulty of implementing reform in modern politics. But success on this front also would make it easier to achieve other change. Australia is one of just seven countries listed by the Inter-Parliamentary Union that has a three-year term of parliament, putting us in the company of New Zealand, Mexico, the Philippines, El Salvador, Qatar and Nauru. By contrast 91 have four-year terms and five years. The latter include countries with which we often like to compare ourselves, like Canada and the UK, which recently also implemented a fixed term. In Australia, every state and territory parliament has managed to introduce four-year terms except Queensland and there Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk has asked a parliamentary committee for a report on the issue and the Opposition already has drawn up a draft bill to implement a fixed four-year parliament. Does a four-year term guarantee better government? On the other hand, it arguably has helped give Mike Baird the courage to implement unpopular reforms like electricity privatisation. Federal parliamentary committees have recommended four-year terms on at least two occasions and Kevin Rudd as opposition leader promised a referendum on fixed four-year terms. A longer time between elections at least creates the opportunity for an improvement. Even better are elections held every four years on a fixed date, providing greater stability and certainty and taking away the advantage of the governing party in determining the timing of the election. NSW introduced four-year fixed parliaments in , with exceptions only if the government loses control of the lower house or if the governor judges it is acting illegally. There are variations on the theme in Victoria and South Australia, where elections can be called after three years but not before, unless a government loses a majority in the lower house. Calls for a four-year term federally were made as long ago as , when it was recommended by a royal commission into the constitution. Despite widespread support for the principle, it was defeated because it included provisions for a reduction in the Senate term from eight years to four years and for simultaneous elections of both houses - both changes the opposition campaigned against. Since then, federal parliamentary committees have recommended four-year terms on at least two occasions and Kevin Rudd as opposition leader promised a referendum on fixed four-year terms. The issue is not without its complications. It requires a change to the constitution, which means a referendum in which a majority of voters nationally, as well as in four of the six states, have to vote in favour for it to be carried. No referendum put to voters since has passed.

The very minimum requirement for success is for both major parties to support a proposal. But from there it gets harder. Unless Senate elections are held at the same time as those for the lower house, we could end up with more elections rather than fewer. At the moment, Senate terms are for six years, with half the Senate up for election every three years, unless the government opts for a double dissolution, which sees the whole Senate facing the people. To maintain the link between both houses, the Senate term could be extended to eight years, as was done with the Legislative Council in NSW. But many would regard eight years as too long to wait to pass judgment on their senators, particularly some of those elected with not much more than a handful of votes through preference deals. While House and Senate elections generally have been held together, there have been exceptions. In a report by a joint parliamentary committee in , both major parties recommended a referendum on four-year terms but not that they be fixed and they left open the length of the Senate term. One reason Labor likes a fixed term is that, on the assumption that the only reason a government could be forced to an early election is through a motion of no confidence being carried in the lower house, it would negate the power of the Senate to block the budget - the issue that prompted Governor-General John Kerr to sack the Whitlam government in . Given that any referendum proposal would first have to be approved by parliament, including a Senate in which the Government does not have the numbers, the path of least resistance could be four year terms for the House and eight years for the Senate. Perhaps that would even help satisfy a craving for more stable government. Mike Steketee is a freelance journalist. He was formerly a columnist and national affairs editor for The Australian.

6: New Australian PM pledges 'generational change' to heal ruling party | Reuters

The Economist offers authoritative insight and opinion on international news, politics, business, finance, science, technology and the connections between them.

7: Stability and change in Australian politics / Don Aitkin | National Library of Australia

Australia's new Prime Minister Scott Morrison pledged to bring stability to the nation after another bout of political upheaval saw Malcolm Turnbull ousted by his own party.

8: Stability and change in Australian politics - ANU Press - ANU

Economic Overview. The Australian economy experienced 26 years of uninterrupted economic growth (it was the only country of the OECD that did not enter into recession during the financial crisis), holding one of the highest growth rates of the developed world and being the world's 13th largest economy.

9: Australian politics | Australia-news | The Guardian

The Australian Election Studies aim to provide a long-term perspective on stability and change in the political attitudes and behaviour of the Australian electorate. The surveys investigate the changing social and attitudinal bases of Australian politics as the society changes.

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