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New South Wales state election 2019: a quick guide

Dr Michael Sloane
Politics and Public Administration Section

Introduction

This Quick Guide provides a brief overview of the 2019 New South Wales Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council election results and the new ministry appointed after the election. It also includes background information on the electoral system in New South Wales, a summary of the 2015 election results, and details of by-elections and changes in party leadership during the 56th Parliament.

New South Wales has a bicameral parliament comprising [a 93-member lower house](#), the Legislative Assembly, and [a 42-member upper house](#), the Legislative Council. Members of the Legislative Assembly are elected under [an optional preferential voting system](#) to represent single-member electorates for four-year terms, while members of the Legislative Council are elected under [an optional preferential proportional voting system](#) to represent the state as a whole for eight-year terms, with only half of the Council's members facing election in each four-year electoral cycle.

The NSW Legislative Assembly has fixed four-year maximum terms: sections 24 and 24A of the [Constitution Act 1902 \(NSW\)](#) (Constitution Act) provide that:

- unless dissolved earlier, each Legislative Assembly expires on the Friday before the first Saturday in March four calendar years after the year in which it was elected; and
- an election is to be held on the fourth Saturday in March following such an expiry.

In accordance with these provisions the 56th Parliament ended with the expiration of the Legislative Assembly on Friday 1 March 2019. [The Governor issued writs](#) on 4 March 2019 for a general election for all 93 seats of the Legislative Assembly and a periodic election for half of the Legislative Council seats (21 seats). Both elections were held on Saturday 23 March 2019.

NSW electoral boundaries remained unchanged between the 2015 and 2019 state elections. [A redistribution of NSW electoral district boundaries](#) is required at least after every second state election, or sooner if certain other criteria are met. [The last such redistribution occurred in 2013](#), prior to the 2015 state election, and the [next redistribution is due to be conducted after the 2019 state election](#).

Background

56th Parliament—election and by-elections

Elections for the 56th Parliament were held on 28 March 2015. [The Liberal-National Coalition Government was returned](#) for a second term with a reduced majority of eight seats in the Legislative Assembly and a slightly increased proportion of Legislative Council seats. The composition of the two Houses by party following the 2015 election is set out below in Table 1.

Table 1: Party representation in the New South Wales Parliament after 2015 election

Party	Legislative Assembly Members	Legislative Council Members
Liberal Party	37	13
The Nationals	17	7
Total Coalition	54	20
Labor Party	31	12 ^(b)
Country Labor	3	
Total Labor	34	12
The Greens	3	5
Independents	2	0
Christian Democratic Party	0	2
Shooters and Fishers Party ^(a)	0	2
Animal Justice Party	0	1
Total	93	42

(a) The Shooters and Fishers Party [changed its name to the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party in 2016](#).

(b) The Labor Party and the Country Labor Party share a group on the Legislative Council ballot paper and NSW Electoral Commission results do not distinguish between the two parties. This figure for the Legislative Council may therefore include Country Labor members.

Source: D McKeown, [New South Wales state election 2015](#), Research Paper, Parliamentary Library, 31 May 2016, p. 12.

[Ten by-elections were held](#) during the 56th Parliament in the electorates of Wollongong, Orange, Canterbury, Gosford, Manly, North Shore, Murray, Cootamundra, Blacktown and Wagga Wagga. Only two of these by-elections altered the representation of parties in the Legislative Assembly:

- following [the resignation of National Party MP Andrew Gee](#), a by-election was held in the seat of Orange on 12 November 2016, at which [Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party candidate Philip Donato was elected](#) and
- following [the resignation of Liberal MP Daryl Maguire](#), a by-election was held in the seat of Wagga Wagga on 8 September 2018 at which [independent candidate Joe McGirr was elected](#).

In addition, party representation in the Legislative Council was altered when [Greens MLC Jeremy Buckingham resigned from the party to sit as an independent](#) in December 2018. However, Mr Buckingham's resignation occurred after the final sitting day of the Legislative Council for the 56th Parliament and he was not returned at the 2019 election. As such, this change had no practical effect with regard to votes in the Legislative Council.

Leadership changes

The Liberal, National and Labor parties each experienced leadership changes during the 56th Parliament and the 2019 NSW election was the [fourth election in a row to be contested by a new Premier](#). [Troy Grant resigned as leader of The Nationals](#) (and thereby also as Deputy Premier) in November 2016 and was [replaced by John Barilaro](#). The deputy leader of The Nationals, Adrian Piccoli, stood down at the same time and was replaced by Niall Blair. [Premier Mike Baird resigned](#) from both the leadership of the Liberal Party and the Legislative Assembly in January 2017. [He was replaced by Gladys Berejiklian](#), who had been deputy leader of the Liberal Party, with Dominic Perrottet assuming the deputy leadership. Finally, [Luke Foley resigned as leader of the Labor Party](#) in November 2018 and was [replaced by his former deputy, Michael Daley](#), with Penny Sharpe assuming the Party's deputy leadership.

Results

Legislative Assembly

All 93 of Legislative Assembly seats were contested at the 2019 election. As set out in Table 2 below, the Liberal-National Coalition won 48 seats; the Labor Party 36; the Greens and the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party three each; and three independent members were also elected. The Liberal-National Coalition thereby won a third term in government with a reduced majority of two seats in the Legislative Assembly.

Compared to the results of the 2015 election, [the Liberal Party lost two seats](#) and The Nationals lost four, while the Labor Party gained two seats and the representation of the Greens was unchanged. The Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party did not have any lower house representatives following the 2015 election, but won three seats in 2019 by retaining the seat of Orange (which it had won in a 2016 by-election), and by winning a further two seats from The Nationals—Barwon and Murray.

[Only two further seats changed hands between the parties](#), with the seat of Lismore won by the Labor Party from The Nationals and the seat of Coogee won by Labor from the Liberal Party. Two well-established independent members, Alex Greenwich in Sydney and Greg Piper in Lake Macquarie, retained their seats, and a third independent, Joe McGirr, also retained the seat of Wagga Wagga, which he had won from the Liberal Party in a by-election in late 2018. These results, along with primary vote shares and swings, are set out below in Table 2.

Details of the results in each of the 93 electorates are available from the [New South Wales Electoral Commission](#).

Table 2: Seats won and first preference votes by successful parties and independents in the Legislative Assembly at the 2019 general election

Party	Seats won	Change from 2015 election ^(a)	Primary vote %	Primary vote swing	Two-party preferred swing
Liberal Party	35	-2	31.99	-3.09	
The Nationals	13	-4	9.60	-0.95	
Total Coalition	48	-6	41.59	-4.04	-2.30
			(52 2PP)		
Labor Party	32	+1	25.91	0	
Country Labor	4	+1	7.40	-0.76	

Party	Seats won	Change from 2015 election ^(a)	Primary vote %	Primary vote swing	Two-party preferred swing
Total Labor	36	+2	33.31	-0.76	+2.30
			(48 2PP)		
The Greens	3	0	9.57	-0.72	
Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party	3	+3	3.46	+3.46	
Independents	3	+1	4.77	+0.93	
Total	93				

(a) These figures do not take into account the Nationals' loss of Orange to the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers in a 2016 by-election and the Liberal's loss of Wagga Wagga to an Independent in a 2018 by-election.

Source: New South Wales Electoral Commission, '[Legislative Assembly State Summary of Elected Candidates](#)', NSW State Election Results 2019; New South Wales Electoral Commission, '[Legislative Assembly State Summary of Elected Candidates](#)', NSW State Election Results 2015; A Green, '[Correction: NSW state election 2-Party preferred result was Coalition 52.0%, Labor 48.0%, a swing of 2.3%](#)', tweet, 2 May 2019.

Legislative Council

Twenty-one of the 42 seats in the NSW Legislative Council were contested at the 2019 election. As set out in Table 3 below, at the election the Liberal-National Coalition won eight seats; the Labor Party seven; the Greens and Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party two seats each; and the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party and the Animal Justice Party one seat each. Both the Liberal Democrats and the Christian Democratic Party achieved a slightly higher percentage of first preference votes than the Animal Justice Party, but failed to win a seat. The failure of the Liberal Democrats to win a seat saw former federal senator David Leyonhjelm unsuccessful in [his attempt to move from the Senate to the Legislative Council](#).

As set out in Table 4 below, this result gives the Liberal-National Coalition a total of 17 seats, reduced from 20 seats in the previous Parliament, and the Labor Party a total of 14 seats, increased from 12 in the previous Parliament. In circumstances where the Liberal-National Coalition and Labor do not agree on a matter before the Council, [the Coalition will need five crossbench votes to achieve a majority](#), whereas it had required only two additional crossbench votes in the previous Parliament. The Labor Party will require eight crossbench votes to achieve a majority.

Among the parties represented on the crossbench, the Animal Justice Party and the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party each gained an additional seat and have a total of two members each, while the Christian Democratic Party lost one seat and now has a single member. Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party was not represented in the Legislative Council in the previous Parliament, but gained two seats at the election, [one of which was won by Mark Latham, a former leader of the Labor Party in the Commonwealth Parliament](#). The seats of two Greens members and one former Greens member who had resigned from the party to become an independent, Jeremy Buckingham, were contested at the election. Mr Buckingham was not returned and only two Greens were elected, leaving the party with a total of four representatives in the Legislative Council. This total was further reduced to three shortly after the election when Justin Field, a continuing member elected in 2015, [resigned from the party to sit as an independent](#).

Full details of the Legislative Council results are available from the [New South Wales Electoral Commission](#).

Table 3: Seats won, first preference group and candidate vote and swing 2019 Legislative Council election

Party	% First preference group and candidate votes	Swing	Seats won
Liberal-Nationals Coalition	34.82	-7.79	8
Labor/Country Labor	29.69	-1.4	7
The Greens	9.73	-0.19	2
Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party	6.90	+6.90 ^(a)	2
Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party	5.54	+1.65	1
Christian Democratic Party (Fred Nile Group)	2.28	-0.65	0
Liberal Democrats	2.18	+2.18 ^(a)	0
Animal Justice Party	1.95	+0.17	1
Keep Sydney Open	1.83	+1.83 ^(a)	0
Others	5.08		0
Total	100		21

(a) The Liberal Democrats, Pauline Hanson's One Nation and Keep Sydney Open did not contest the 2015 Legislative Council election.

Source: New South Wales Electoral Commission, '[First Preference Group and Candidate Votes - First Preference Group and Candidate by Vote Type](#)', NSW State Election Results 2019; New South Wales Electoral Commission, '[First Preference Group and Candidate Votes - First Preference Group and Candidate by Vote Type](#)', NSW State Election Results 2015.

Table 4: Current (post-election) party representation in the Legislative Council

Party	Continuing members	New members (elected 2019)	Total current members	Change from beginning of 56th Parliament
Labor Party (including Country Labor)	7	7	14	+2
Liberal Party	6	5	11	-2
The Nationals	3	3	6	-1
Total Coalition	9	8	17	-3
The Greens ^(a)	1	2	3	-2
Animal Justice Party	1	1	2	+1
Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party	1	1	2	+1
Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party	0	2	2	+2

Party	Continuing members	New members (elected 2019)	Total current members	Change from beginning of 56th Parliament
Christian Democratic Party	1	0	1	-1
Independent ^(a)	1	0	1	+1
Total	21	21	42	

(a) These figures take into account the resignation of Justin Field from the Greens to sit as an independent shortly after the election in April 2019. He is listed as an independent rather than a Green in the 'Continuing Members' column.

Source: New South Wales Electoral Commission, '[Legislative Council - Candidates in Sequence of Election](#)', NSW State Election Results 2019; New South Wales Electoral Commission, '[Legislative Council - Candidates in Sequence of Election](#)', NSW State Election Results 2015.

New Ministry

Table 5 below sets out the new Berejiklian ministry as [appointed by the Governor of New South Wales](#) on 2 April 2019.

Table 5: Ministry appointed on 2 April 2019

Minister	Offices
The Hon. Gladys Berejiklian MP	Premier
The Hon. (John) Giovanni Domenic Barilaro MP	Deputy Premier Minister for Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade
The Hon. Dominic Francis Perrottet MP	Treasurer
The Hon. Paul Lawrence Toole MP	Minister for Regional Transport and Roads
The Hon. Donald Thomas Harwin MLC	Special Minister of State Minister for the Public Service and Employee Relations, Aboriginal Affairs, and the Arts Vice-President of the Executive Council
The Hon. Andrew James Constance MP	Minister for Transport and Roads
The Hon. Bradley Ronald Hazzard MP	Minister for Planning and Public Spaces
The Hon. Robert Gordon Stokes MP	Minister for Planning and Public Spaces
The Hon. Mark Raymond Speakman SC MP	Attorney General Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence
The Hon. Victor Michael Dominello MP	Minister for Customer Service

Minister	Offices
The Hon. Sarah Mitchell MLC	Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning
The Hon. David Andrew Elliott MP	Minister for Police and Emergency Services
The Hon. Melinda Jane Pavey MP	Minister for Water, Property and Housing
The Hon. Stuart Laurence Ayres MP	Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney
The Hon. Matthew John Kean MP	Minister for Energy and Environment
The Hon. Adam John Marshall MP	Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales
The Hon. Anthony John Roberts MP	Minister for Counter Terrorism and Corrections
The Hon. Shelley Elizabeth Hancock MP	Minister for Local Government
The Hon. Kevin John Anderson MP	Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation
The Hon. Dr Geoffrey Lee MP	Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education
The Hon. Anthony John Sidoti MP	Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans
The Hon. Bronwyn Taylor MLC	Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women
The Hon. Gareth James Ward MP	Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services
The Hon. Damien Francis Tudehope MLC	Minister for Finance and Small Business

Source: [NSW Government Gazette](#), No. 30, 2 April 2019, pp. 1087–90.

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