

Queensland State Election 2020 Political Briefing Week 3

Each Friday during the Queensland Election Hawker Britton takes a look back at the week that was and provides insights and analysis on the shape of the race in the lead up to election day on October 31st.

The 2020 State Election is like no other. Whichever party forms government will have the opportunity of a four-year fixed term – the first in Queensland history.

This campaign comes on the backdrop of the once-in-a-generation COVID-19 health and economic crisis which brings great accelerations and disruptions across all facets of the state.

State of the race – Labor and LNP

Week three of the State Election campaign saw the start of the record-breaking early voting with hundreds of thousands of Queenslanders casting their decision in polling centres across the state. As significant parts of the electorate cast their vote the speed and intensity of the major party's campaign increased markedly.

Public polling shows the race continues to be very close in key seats. The big unknown question for the campaigns is this – with large numbers of votes already cast are the fundamental dynamics of the race now baked in place from the first two weeks of the campaign or are there still significant undecided voters in the wings able to be swayed by last minute announcements?

Labor launched its campaign formally on Sunday in a warehouse in Logan, highlighting its message of economic recovery and starting the week with momentum. Labor continued with a week of announcements on the Gold Coast, Townsville and Cairns focused on job creation, tourism, health and infrastructure planning. In a boost for Labor's economic plan S&P affirmed the Government's AA+ credit rating. The campaign also launched the 'LNP Cuts Bus' with bus captain Anthony Lynham being joined by Treasurer Dick and Minister Fentiman. The bus travelled from Stafford to Mackay to highlight the risk of LNP cuts to jobs and services.

The LNP started the week with campaign stumbles including suspended campaign workers still active in Redcliffe. For the first time during the campaign the LNP finished with two consecutive days without an unforced error when they released policies concerning youth justice and childcare. The LNP Children Curfew policy in particular dominated the conversation for the second half of the week with questions over its implementation emerging. Leader Deb Frecklington campaigned in Townsville, Cairns and the Gold Coast in a mixture of forward leaning and defensive campaigning. By week's end LNP Shadow Treasurer had confirmed that LNP Budget costings would be released on Thursday 29th.

Both leaders have now committed to two debates – one on Wednesday and another on Friday at the traditional Media Club election event.

Early voting and postal voting

In another major acceleration of trends under COVID-19 early voting in both pre-poll and postal votes are expected to be in record highs. The Electoral Commission has strongly encouraged voters to make use of the entire two week 'voting period'.

More than 898,000 postal votes have been printed and issued to electors. As of 3.30pm on Thursday over 459,000 voters had cast their vote in person.

On these available figures from the Electoral Commission nearly 40% of voters have already either been sent a ballot or cast their vote at an early voting centre. With seven more days of early voting plus election day itself still to run this is a highly significant proportion of the electorate who have already voted.

On election night all eyes will be on the Electoral Commission of Queensland and their capacity to count the large postal and pre-poll votes in addition to the likely small election day ballots.

The ECQ has released several new work practices designed to aid the counting process. These include:

- Establishing postal hubs in Townsville and Brisbane
- Pre-checking postal declarations before election day
- Counting all received postal ballots on election night

Next week Hawker Britton will forecast what to expect when watching election night coverage in these unique circumstances.

Labor's Policy Week

The Labor Government made a series of significant announcements over the course of the week.

- On Friday the Premier announced a pledge of \$20 Million towards stage 1 of an improved Sunshine Coast Stadium
- On Saturday at Australia Zoo Labor revealed a further \$74 million to help rebuild Queensland's tourism industry in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, including:
 - o A \$20 million *Queensland Tourism Activation Fund*
 - o \$20 million in events boost to attract more events for Queensland. This investment will include \$14 million for major events and \$1.5 million a year for business events
 - o \$15 million to Tourism and Events Queensland for a marketing blitz to encourage travellers to experience Queensland
 - o \$15 million regional tourism organisation fund to provide a special one-off funding injection to regional tourism organisations
 - o \$4 million to deliver business capability training and future proofing the industry.
- On Monday the Premier announced that a re-elected Palaszczuk Labor Government will continue to back Queensland's Country Racing with a \$35.2 million for prize money as well as tracks and facilities
- In Coomera the Deputy Premier announced a \$160 million investment in new and expanded hospitals to cater for the health needs of a growing Gold Coast with a new hospital and health precinct for the northern Gold Coast region in Coomera
- The Premier and Minister for Small Business announced a \$140 million strategy to lift competitiveness and resilience for small business

- Two new new regional manufacturing hubs will be invested to establish, invest in manufacturing skills training and provide targeted grants to manufacturing businesses in Central Queensland
- Speaking at the Local Government Association of Queensland conference the Premier and Minister for Local Government announced a \$600 million investment in the popular Works for Queensland program and in an South East Queensland Community Stimulus Package, as well as another \$280 million for the Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme
- In Townsville on Wednesday, Labor revealed its support for a Real Bruce Plan that prioritises safety upgrades and takes trucks off the highway onto a 'Second Bruce' inland freight route
- In Cairns on Thursday the Government announced that \$40 million would be invested to protect the Great Barrier Reef

Labor also made a large number of announcements at their campaign launch on Sunday – detailed in Hawker Britton’s note – <http://www.hawkerbritton.com/2020/10/queensland-election-political-briefing-campaign-launches/>

LNP’s Policy Week

The LNP has made a series of announcements this week.

- On Friday in Brisbane, the LNP announced it would provide \$14 million to deliver an x-ray unit at Brisbane’s markets
- The LNP announced that it would mandate government contracts to go to Queensland businesses in the food, manufacturing and medical industries
- The LNP launched a \$15.5 million plan for mature age and long-term jobseekers, including:
 - o \$9 million for up-skilling and coordinating mature age and long-term jobseekers to get back to work
 - o \$6 million for a work re-entry internship program for 600 mature age and long-term jobseekers
 - o \$0.5 million for a state-wide Experience Counts campaign
- In Cairns Deb Frecklington announced a LNP Government would invest \$20m to kickstart the Cairns University Hospital project, including \$5 million for a business case for the hospital and \$15 million to acquire the site.
- The LNP announced a recycling policy including:
 - o A \$50m trial to build roads from recycled plastic
 - o The LNP will initiate a reverse auction to establish a solar panel recycling facility in Queensland,
 - o Banning batteries and e-waste from landfill, starting with a public education campaign before legislating a ban on the practice by 2024.
 - o Support recycling research and development
 - o Fast-track approvals for recycling infrastructure
- LNP would make a \$49.8 million investment to create a new one-stop-shop for post-school education and training in Central Queensland.
- The LNP announced it would launch a \$50 million advertising marketing campaign for Queensland tourism
- Deb Frecklington revealed a LNP Government would invest \$180 million to fund stage 1 of the Cairns University Hospital project
- In Townsville the LNP announced it would introduce a night time curfew on young people This policy imposes a curfew of 8pm for youths aged 14 and younger and 10pm for youths aged 15 to 17 - with police required to take children into their custody if found outside after curfew and a \$250 fine issued to parents

- On the Gold Coast on Thursday the LNP leader announced \$80 million in upgrades to expand school facilities, increase available places and subsidise childcare training to address worker shortages.

In case you missed it

Hawker Britton: Campaign launches - <http://www.hawkerbritton.com/2020/10/queensland-election-political-briefing-campaign-launches/>

Hawker Britton: Seats to watch - <http://www.hawkerbritton.com/2020/10/queensland-state-election-seats-watch/>

COVID-19 Update and Roadmap

There are currently only four active cases of COVID-19 in Queensland.

The Queensland Government announced its COVID-Safe Roadmap, charting the next three months of responding to the virus and the pathway to easing restrictions. You can see it in detail here - <http://www.hawkerbritton.com/2020/10/queenslands-covid-safe-roadmap/>

Feedback or insights?

If you or your company has a particular campaign policy issue, insight or analysis you feel is missing from this briefing or that you'd like further information about please contact me on estein@hawkerbritton.com or call 0431 744 115 at any time.

Regards,

Elliot.

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