

Andrew Bolt: Misfiring leaders fail Donald Trump test

Andrew Bolt, Herald Sun, February 1, 2017 5:30pm

Subscriber only

PRIME Minister Malcolm Turnbull and Labor leader Bill Shorten have failed the Donald Trump test. Both know voters are sick of their parties and both this week gave speeches at the National Press Club hoping to stop the rot.

Both almost certainly failed — yet will feel they did well.

So the leader who cleaned up was One Nation's Pauline Hanson, whose party this week scored an astonishing 10 per cent in the latest Essential poll.

ANDREW BOLT: TURNBULL GOVERNMENT HITS NEW LOW IN ESSENTIAL POLL



Shorten on Tuesday showed he understood the challenge the big parties now faced. “Too many Australians think the political system is broken — and more than a few don’t trust us to fix it,” he said, adding that Trump’s win in the US showed this cynicism was the mood of the times.

If you think he’s exaggerating, consider another finding from this week’s Essential poll, which had the Liberal primary vote down to 32 per cent and Labor’s 37. The poll also found

that 40 per cent of Australians think the system is broke and needs fundamental change, and another 44 per cent think it needs refining.



Opposition leader Bill Shorten speaks at the National Press Club in Canberra on Tuesday.
Picture: AAP/Mick Tsikas

Shorten, looking at journalists and politicians in his Canberra audience, warned: “In these unusual times, politics-as-usual doesn’t cut it.” Yet that’s exactly what he and Turnbull, who gave his own speech on Wednesday, promised. Shorten again committed Labor to the warming scare, same-sex marriage and “reconciliation”. To tired identity politics. The only concession he made to the none-of-the-above movement was to promise a crackdown on politicians’ expenses.

But why should he take risks? Labor may be on the nose, but it’s still ahead of the Liberals. If Shorten appeased the voters drifting to Hanson, the Labor Left would revolt.

Turnbull’s speech was far better, but, again, more of the same: spruiking child care and business tax cuts. He too talked of a crackdown on politicians’ expenses, but that was it.

Yet Turnbull, too, will feel happy. He staked out what will indeed be a big battleground until the election: electricity prices. Turnbull attacked Labor’s insane promise to triple the

renewable electricity it will force Australians to use by 2030 — a promise of a 50 per cent renewable energy target costing an estimated \$50 billion.

But the two big parties are satisfied if they just beat the other. Meanwhile, millions of Australians will keep looking for alternatives.