

Robert Menzies worked with Keith Murdoch on forming the Liberal Party 70 years ago.

Extract from Gary's Morgan's "Women, the Media, and People from Other Countries who have made Victoria - 1851 to Today", see Pages 48 & 49.

<http://www.roymorgan.com/~media/Files/Papers/2008/20080707.pdf>

Australian Roy Morgan "Gallup Poll",
Survey 16, Q 4, May 15, 1943

POLL SHOWS DRIFT FROM MAIN POLITICAL PARTIES

Between now and the Federal election, the major parties (A.L.P., U.A.P. and C.P.) will have a busy time regaining the support of "wanderers," according to an Australia-wide Gallup Poll taken in May.

Support for the major parties is now evenly divided, so victory at the election will depend entirely on what happens and what is said in the next few months.

Representative cross-sections of electors in every electoral division of the Commonwealth were interviewed for Australian Public Opinion Polls during May and asked:—

"If a Federal election were held today, which party would you like to win?"

Each person interviewed was handed a card, on which was printed the names of eight parties—U.A.P., Country, Labor, Communist, Douglas Credit, One Parliament, Returned Servicemen, and Services and Citizens. Order on the card was varied to minimise the effect of position. A selection was made by 92 out of each 100 people interviewed.

Of those who made a selection:
38 p.c. would like Labor to win,
35 p.c. favor U.A.P. or C.P.,
3 p.c. selected Communist,
and

24 p.c. named other parties.

They were also asked how they had voted at the last Commonwealth election in 1940. Of each 100 who had then voted Labor:
69 would like Labor to win again,
13 selected "One Parliament,"
6 favor Communists,
4 would change to U.A.P.-C.P.,
4 prefer Servicemen's,
3 favor Independents, and
1 is for Douglas Credit.

Of each 100 who had voted U.A.P. or Country Party in 1940:
69 would like U.A.P.-C.P. to win again,
18 selected "One Parliament,"
5 would change to Labor,
4 prefer Servicemen's, and
4 favor Independents.

Where Support Lies
Women are slightly more faithful to the three major parties (Labor, U.A.P. and C.P.) than are the men. One man in three said he would like one of the minor parties to win and one woman in four expressed the same opinion.

Labor's greatest strength is among the younger electors. Of people under 30, 46 p.c. gave their



first preference for Labor, but the proportion declined steadily to 33 p.c. among those over 60.

U.A.P./C.P. support is in the reverse order; 41 p.c. of those over 60, compared with 25 p.c. among people under 30.

The drift from the major parties is strongest in New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia and Tasmania, in each of which states about a third of those interviewed selected minor parties. In Victoria and South Australia minor parties were selected by only one person in five.

Second Preferences

Second preference votes were also recorded, and analysis of them discloses a remarkable balance between Labor and U.A.P.-C.P. forces.

After distributing second preferences of those who gave first preferences to minor parties, it becomes apparent that:—

- 81 p.c. of both Labor and U.A.P.-C.P. voters in 1940 have not changed sides;
- 7 p.c. of both groups have changed sides, and
- 12 p.c. of both groups would now give their first and second preferences to minor parties and Independents, or are undecided.

In 1943, Sir Keith Murdoch and Robert Menzies (both Presbyterians) called on Roy Morgan to ask him to interpret the 24% of people who 'named other parties' in the May 1943 Australia-wide Roy Morgan Gallup Poll, 'Poll Shows Drift From Main Political Parties'. Using these results, Menzies decided that the only way he could return the United Australia Party (UAP) to Government was to create the Liberal Party, combining UAP, Country Party and supporters of minor parties, including the Queensland Women's Electoral League. In 1944, Robert Menzies was instrumental in the [formation of the Australian Liberal Party](#), and was to become Australia's longest-serving Prime Minister, in office from 1949 until he retired on January 20, 1966.

"The relationship between KM [Sir Keith Murdoch] and Menzies held many complications, even contradictions.

Both men shared the view that Australia needed to revive the spirit of market-oriented enterprise and break away from the deeply entrenched acceptance of centralised government regulation of economic activity; KM had strongly supported the concept of a new political party embodying the liberal philosophy – an idea turned into reality by Menzies in founding the Liberal Party of Australia. KM recognised the intellectual power shown by Menzies, but questioned his electoral appeal...

Australian Roy Morgan "Gallup Poll",
Survey 50, Q6, June 28, 1947

Bigger Vote For Liberals If Menzies Not Leader?

If a Federal election had been held in July, with someone other than Mr Menzies as leader of the Liberal Party, it is possible that a Liberal-Country Party Government would have been returned to power.

This possibility was revealed when Gallup Poll interviewers asked a nation-wide sample of voters for their opinions about the leadership of the two major parties.

People interviewed were first asked which party they would probably vote for if an election were held now.

The result, which appears above, shows no change in party support since the last Federal election a year ago.

Those who said they would vote Labor or Independent were then asked: "Would you vote Liberal or Country Party if Mr. Menzies were not leader of the Opposition?"

On the other hand, Liberal and Country Party voters were asked: "Would you vote Labor if Mr. Chifley were not leader?"

Answers of Labor voters divide as follows:—

10 per cent. said they WOULD vote Liberal or Country Party if Mr. Menzies were not leader.

8 per cent. said PERHAPS they would vote Liberal or Country Party, and

82 per cent. said they would NOT vote Liberal or Country Party whether Mr. Menzies were leader or not.

These Labor voters account for 53 per cent. of the electorate. Supporters of Independent candidates comprise another 3 per cent. of the electorate, and almost half of them said they would change to Liberal or Country Party if Mr. Menzies were not leader.

Liberal and Country Party supporters, who represent 44 per cent. of the electorate, answered:—

3 per cent. said they WOULD vote Labor if Mr. Chifley were not leader.

5 per cent. said PERHAPS they would vote Labor, and 92 per cent. said they would NOT vote Labor.

Combined answers of Labor-Independent and Liberal-Country voters give the following result, with percentages stated in respect to the total electorate. (Figures in the earlier tables have been converted to the basis of 56 Labor and Independent voters to every 44 Liberal and Country voters, as at the last Federal election):—

Of Labor and Independent Voters
6 per cent. would vote Liberal-CP. if Menzies not leader,

4 per cent. might vote Liberal-CP.

46 per cent. would not change.

Of Liberal-Country Voters
1 per cent. would vote Labor if Chifley not leader.

2 per cent. might vote Labor.

41 per cent. would not change.

From the above figures, it seems that if an election had been held in July, and Mr. Menzies had been replaced by another good leader, the Liberal and Country Parties might have polled nearly 50 per cent. of the first preference votes. Judging by the 1937 and 1940 elections, that would have resulted in a small majority of the seats going to Liberal and Country Party candidates.

In 1947 a defining exchange of letters between the politician and the journalist developed after *The Herald* ran the results of an opinion poll revealing that Menzies lacked voter appeal."

(R M Younger, *Keith Murdoch: Founder of a Media Empire*, Sydney, Harper Collins Publishers, 2003, p. 299).

Despite Menzies' unpopularity, he won a close 1949 Federal Election on the issue of 'bank nationalisation'.

The Catholic Acts (UK 1829, Van Diemen's Land & New South Wales Acts, January 1830), or the issue of Catholic equality, made it possible for the formation of the Democratic Labor Party (DLP) on April 9, 1955 – a splinter group of the Labor Party with a strong affiliation with the Catholic Church and Archbishop Mannix, in particular.

This kept the Menzies L-CP (L-NP today) Government in office from then until Whitlam won the 1972 Federal Election.