

## FOURTEEN REASONS WHY THE LNP (ALMOST?) WON

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1. The LNP had a vast parliamentary majority and thus staffing assets, particularly campaign support staff in offices to represent constituents.
2. The Premier chose the timing of the election to minimize criticism and catch the ALP disorganized. This reinforced the perception that he was smart enough to control events and 'pull rabbits out of hats'.
3. The LNP were able to offer vast amounts of infrastructure dollars for projects targeted to particular audience as a result of the privatisation strategy variously described as 'asset sales' and 'asset leases'.
4. They had the public service support to generate detailed planning documents and specific departmental plans in health and education. This assistance was facilitated by seeking reliable public service leaders who had worked with the Premier in his local government days.
5. The party leadership had created the impression of being consultative over a long period by generating reports which invited public feedback, reinforced by government-paid advertising.
6. The law and order issue was literally dramatized (on TV). Senior police regularly appeared on TV and in the press to identify their high regard for government as a strong supporter in providing expanded resources. Dramatic footage provided from attendant TV news teams reinforced the impression that these extra resources were dramatically affecting the crime rate. The removal of sources of independent statistical analysis meant these impressions could not be measured against long-term trends so the rhetoric could be sustained about making the community safer.
7. The LNP could also claim to have evidence to support improvements in health services after various debacles under the previous regime.
8. In the other key area of education, there were solid performers at all levels in education (apart from the impact of privatisation on TAFE). The department was headed by a personable Minister competent to sell the benefits to voters.
9. LNP voters heard nothing about the impact of national policies on the institutions of concern. The Vice Chancellors collectively supported fee de-regulation and there were no complaints from private schools about the abandonment of Gonski, so the Abbott policy shifts on education did not feature in the campaign.
10. Groups who traditionally provide funding support as well as public approval for the LNP felt they had gained benefits for their members compared to the previous ALP regime. Spokesmen for the business communities and the mining industry were uncritically supportive in response to a range of government initiatives. Key policies such as changes to

industrial relations law and workers compensation were seen as restricting the influence of 'class enemies' like the trade union movement.

11. LNP voters were originally concerned about the poor public image of the Premier and his Treasurer. However their abrasiveness was modified belatedly by implementing the recommendation of a major public relations firm to undertake 'Operation Boring' (and hide Attorney-General Jarrod Bleijie). After this change, the leaders could feed off favourable media coverage during the campaign, especially from the Murdoch press.
12. The LNP and its supporters had multiple mechanisms for suppressing dissent -
  - (a) using service agreements to prevent criticism from specialist community groups, threatening to withdraw funding if they did not comply;
  - (b) using public service rules to prevent contributions from inside experts which might have contradicted the party line;
  - (c) using implied threats of withdrawing grants from university research centres dealing with controversial topics, to dampen any external criticism;
  - (d) influencing the wide range of appointments within the control of politicians to ensure compliance with government policy preferences including directors-general, corporate managers, magistrates and judges;
  - (e) weakening the formal institutions of accountability such as the CMC/CCC, including requiring political approval for the 'independent' CCC's research agenda.
13. Using the party's parliamentary vast majority to eliminate opportunities for dissent inside Parliament, including through the Estimates Committees and other subject-area committees, monopolising question time and suspending standing orders to truncate or avoid discussion of 'minor' legislative amendments, often passed late at night, designed to reward specific interests and individuals.
14. The LNP were able to exploit the sexism widely spread across the electorate and draw parallels with attitudes to Julia Gillard through a focus on her personal attributes. Whereas the Premier presented a picture of domestic bliss and a model supportive wife, the ALP alternative had many drawbacks, including a 'grating' voice and, most damning of all in a policy sense, a poor memory for numbers, especially on early morning radio.