

Explanation of Mackerras Pendulum for the New South Wales State General Election to be held on Saturday 25 March 2023

At the 25 March 2023 NSW state election there will be 93 seats in the Legislative Assembly, the same number as in 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2019. The two most recent elections were held on the same electoral boundaries. Their dates were 28 March 2015 and 23 March 2019, those being the third Saturday in March as fixed by statute.

During 2020 and 2021 there was a redistribution of seats which was completed in August 2021. This resulted in a report from the Electoral Districts Redistribution Panel which came to 214 pages. Sixteen electoral districts were left unchanged in boundaries or had boundary changes involving fewer than 100 electors. They were Balmain, Barwon, Bega, Clarence, Coffs Harbour, Cronulla, Kiama, Monaro, North Shore, Orange, Pittwater, Port Stephens, South Coast, Terrigal, Tweed and Wagga Wagga.

The result in 2019 meant that I placed 53 seats on the Coalition side of my post-election pendulum, the numbers being 35 Liberals, 13 Nationals, three for the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party and two independents. On the Labor-Greens side I had 40 seats, being 36 Labor, three Greens and one independent.

Looking at the pendulum overleaf, however, it will be noticed that there are now only 51 seats on the Coalition side. The Liberal Party is now shown at 34 seats, the Nationals 12, the SFF two and three independents. The change in SFF and independent numbers is the consequence of the decision in July 2022 of Murray MP Helen Dalton to leave the SFF and become an independent. That was the second defection in the life of the 57th Parliament. The first occurred in September 2020 when Leslie Williams, the member for Port Macquarie, defected from the Nationals to the Liberals. She gave as the reason for the decision her dissatisfaction with the koala policy of the Nationals. Meanwhile, the Liberal numbers are down by two, reflecting the party's loss of Bega at the by-election in February 2022 plus the fact that the redistribution has changed Heathcote from a seat held by the Liberal Party to one notionally held by Labor. Consequently, Heathcote and Bega are the only two electoral district names to change sides on the pendulum.

On the Labor-Greens side the Labor number has risen from 36 to 38, reflecting the changes noted above. In the redistribution Labor lost the very safe seat of Lakemba by abolition but should win the new seat of Leppington. Bega, Heathcote and Leppington are shown in red to indicate their unusual status, as explained above. Meanwhile, these seats have had a change of name: the old Baulkham Hills becomes the new Kellyville, Ku-ring-gai is re-named Wahroonga, Mulgoa as Badgerys Creek and Seven Hills as Winston Hills.

The statistics in the pendulum of swings required to lose follow the patterns of all my pendulums. Thus, Labor needs a swing of 2.6 per cent in Barwon, indicating the swing it needs to take the seat from a notional Nationals member – and 1.2 per cent to take Sydney from a notional Liberal member. The Liberal Party needs a swing of 26.6 per cent to take Newtown from the Greens member and the Nationals need a swing of 4.9 per cent to take Ballina from the Greens member.

From my own resources it has been easy for me to calculate swing figures on my pendulum for the 16 seats (virtually) unchanged in boundaries, listed above. In addition, it has also been easy in these 41 seats: Albury, Ballina, Bathurst, Camden, Cessnock, Charlestown, Cootamundra, Davidson, Dubbo, Gosford, Heffron, Hornsby, Lake Macquarie, Lane Cove, Liverpool, Macquarie Fields, Manly, Maroubra, Miranda, Murray, Myall Lakes, Newcastle, Newtown, Northern Tablelands, Oxley, Port Macquarie, Port Stephens, Riverstone, Rockdale, Ryde, Shellharbour, Strathfield, Summer Hill, Swansea, Sydney, The Entrance, Upper Hunter, Vacluse, Wallsend, Wollondilly and Wyong.

That leaves 36 seats: Auburn, Badgerys Creek, Bankstown, Blacktown, Blue Mountains, Cabramatta, Campbelltown, Canterbury, Castle Hill, Coogee, Drummoyne, East Hills, Epping, Fairfield, Goulburn, Granville, Hawkesbury, Heathcote, Holsworthy, Keira, Kellyville, Kogarah, Leppington, Lismore, Londonderry, Maitland, Mount Druitt, Oatley, Parramatta, Penrith, Prospect, Tamworth, Wahroonga, Wakehurst, Willoughby, Winston Hills and Wollongong. In these seats I have sought help from Antony Green's publication dated August 2021 and titled "2020/21 NSW Redistribution: Analysis of Final Electoral Boundaries", NSW Parliamentary Research Service background paper Number 1/2021.

At this point it is worth noting that certain seats were not contested between Lib/Nat and Labor. Hence the need for my next two tables.

TABLE 1: General Election 23 March 2019

Liberal and Nationals seats showing swings needed by Greens and Independents.

Rank	Seat	% Swing Needed
1	Davidson (Lib)	25.3 by Greens
2	Tamworth (Nat)	21.2 by Independent Mark Rodda
3	Pittwater (Lib)	20.9 by Greens
4	Vaucluse (Lib)	19.4 by Greens
5	Manly (Lib)	12.9 by Greens
6	North Shore (Lib)	11.2 by Independent Carolyn Corrigan
7	Coffs Harbour (Nat)	10.3 by Independent Sally Townley
8	Wollondilly (Lib)	5.5 by Independent Judy Hannan
9	Dubbo (Nat)	2.1 by Independent Mathew Dickerson

TABLE 2: General Election 23 March 2019

Non-Coalition seats showing swings needed by Nationals, Labor and Liberal parties

Rank	Seat	% Swing Needed
1	Lake Macquarie (Ind)	23.2 by Labor
2	Wagga Wagga (Ind)	15.5 by Nationals
3	Orange (Shooters, Fishers and Farmers)	15.2 by Nationals
4	Newtown (Greens)	11.9 by Labor
5	Sydney (Ind)	11.8 by Liberal
6	Balmain (Greens)	10.1 by Labor
7	Barwon (Shooters, Fishers and Farmers)	6.6 by Nationals
8	Ballina (Greens)	4.9 by Nationals
9	Murray (Shooters, Fishers and Farmers)	2.8 by Nationals

BY-ELECTIONS AND THE PENDULUM

During the 57th Parliament there were five by-elections, all caused by the resignations of former members. The first was in Upper Hunter on 22 May 2021. Then there were four by-elections held together on 12 February 2022. That kind of event used to be known as a "mini general election", but this particular event was generally described in the media as a "Super Saturday of by-elections". The seats involved were Bega, Monaro, Strathfield and Willoughby.

Monaro and Strathfield were without interest psephologically. Consequently, my pendulum ignores them – as is my usual practice. Their buffers on the pendulum of 11.7 and 5.2 are based on the general election held on 23 March 2019. More detail is now given in the three cases of by-elections which should not be ignored in designing a pendulum. I begin with the final statistics in Upper Hunter:

Upper Hunter (22 May 2021)

Dave Layzell (National)	18,484	55.82%
Jeff Drayton (Labor)	14,631	44.18%

Swing needed by Labor: 5.9%

Had there been no boundary changes I would have shown Upper Hunter on my pendulum as having a buffer of 5.9 – but there were major changes. To 50,520 Upper Hunter electors were added 6,357 from Maitland, 2,797 from Cessnock and 20 from Port Stephens, to make a total of 59,694 electors. Meanwhile, there were 5,146 electors removed from Upper Hunter and placed in five other electoral districts. What I have done is calculate the by-election votes of those remaining in Upper Hunter and added them to the 2019 general election votes from places added, as described above. Consequently, the pendulum shows a buffer of 3.8, not 5.9.

The situation in Bega was similar – but different. Its boundaries were left unchanged, so its 58,444 electors simply remained in Bega. Since it changed hands from Liberal to Labor I show it in red on my pendulum. The by-election final statistics are as follows:

Bega (12 February 2022)

Michael Holland (Labor)	24,837	55.06%
Fiona Kotvojs (Liberal)	20,269	44.94%

Swing needed by Liberal: 5.1% – the statistic shown on the pendulum.

For those wondering why the totals for Bega are so much higher than in Upper Hunter the explanation is that there were only 4,386 exhausted votes in Bega but 14,338 in Upper Hunter.

Willoughby is different again from Bega and Upper Hunter. The by-election final statistics are as follows:

Willoughby (12 February 2022)

Tim James (Liberal)	19,886	53.30%
Larissa Penn (Independent)	17,421	46.70%

Swing needed by Penn: 3.3%

There were 6,256 exhausted votes. In this case, however, my pendulum ignores the by-election since the pendulum is on a Liberal-Labor scale. Nevertheless, there were boundary changes. That is why my Liberal versus Labor buffer was 21.1 on my immediate post-election pendulum but is 20.7 overleaf. Willoughby gained Castle Cove from Davidson (1,931 electors) and Artarmon from Lane Cove (3,119 electors) meaning its old number of 54,933 electors becomes 59,983 on its new map. For academic interest I conclude by showing the result of the final win by Gladys Berejiklian.

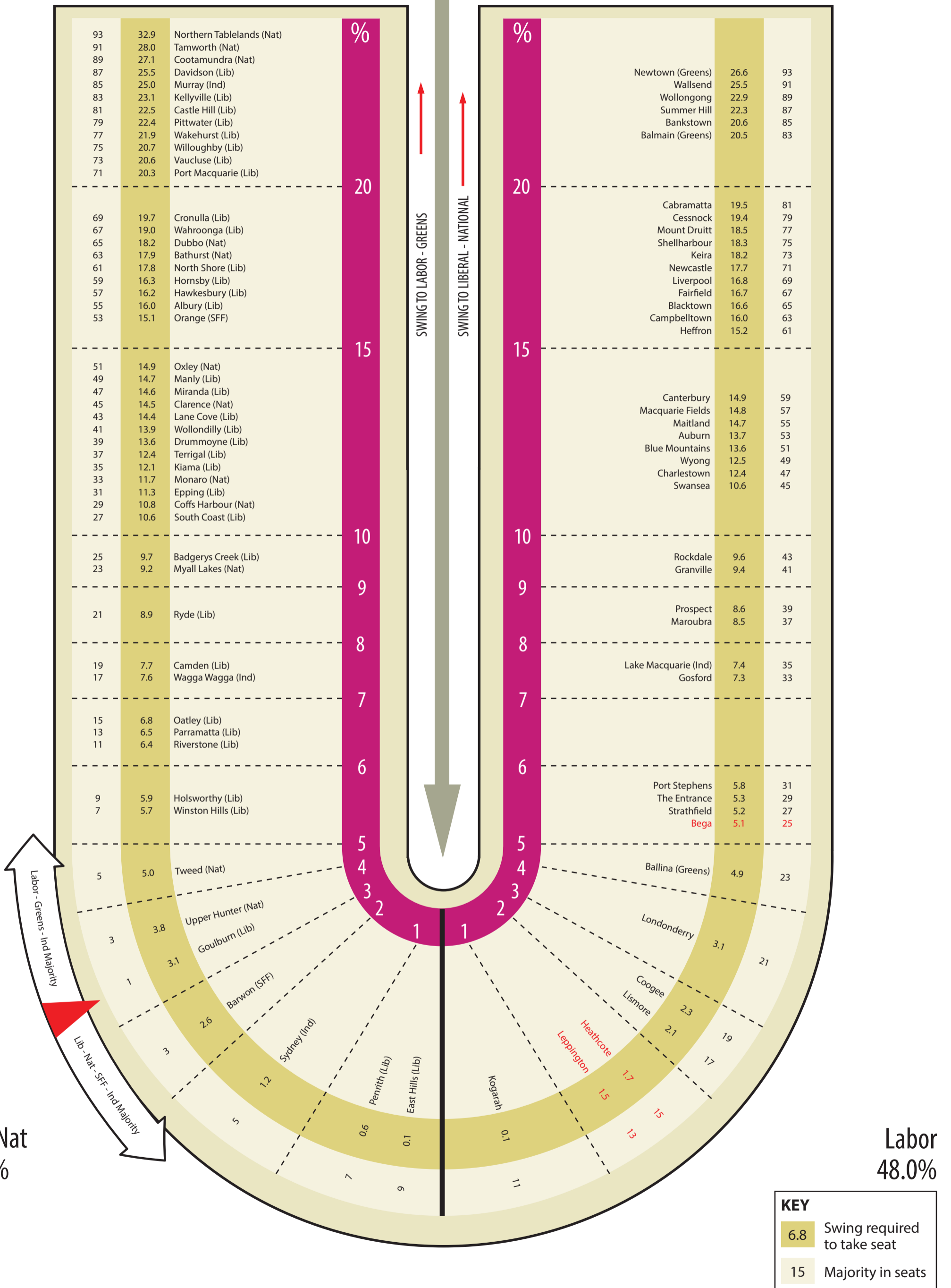
Willoughby (23 March 2019)

Gladys Berejiklian (Liberal)	29,142	71.03%
Justin Reiss (Labor)	11,885	28.97%

Swing needed by Labor: 21.1%

Mackerras Pendulum New South Wales 2023

Liberal 34 National 12 SFF 2 Independent 3 Total 51 Majority 9 Labor 38 Greens 3 Independent 1 Total 42



Lib - Nat
52.0%

Labor
48.0%

Result of General Election, 23 March 2019, as adjusted for boundary changes finalised in August 2021, and for by-elections in Upper Hunter (22 May 2021) and Bega (12 February 2022). Three seats on the Labor side are shown in red, Bega because the by-election changed its status from Liberal to Labor, Heathcote because boundary changes moved it from actual Liberal to notional Labor, and Leppington because it is the only genuinely new seat. The safe Labor seat of Lakemba has been abolished.