



Tony's tour: Minister for New Voters takes Labor's citizenship spree national

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Body

Hundreds of new citizens in Perth have been sworn in, schooled about electoral boundaries and funnelled past an enrol-to-vote booth, as Home Affairs Minister Tony Burke takes [his audacious push to certify thousands of new Australians](#) to the state that could decide the election.

The Australian can reveal WA Labor MPs facing tough battles to keep their seats and rogue Liberal MP Ian Good-enough - whose campaign against his former party's new candidate could hand the ALP a rare -opportunity to pick up a seat off the Coalition - were Mr Burke's guests of honour at the Perth -Convention Centre event on Thursday.

The Home Affairs citizenship ceremonies will continue in Perth on Friday, before returning to Melbourne on Saturday. They will then head to Queensland for ceremonies in Brisbane on Sunday and Toowoomba on Tuesday. A massive ceremony was held at Sydney Olympic Park last Friday.

The Coalition has accused Labor of using the ceremonies to sign up new voters who will be favourable to the government for having granted them citizenship.

As [Mr Burke](#) told the audience of new citizens that they would "make Australia even better", Labor's MP for Hasluck, Tania Lawrence, used her address to -remind the crowd of the new boundaries in her electorate. Meanwhile, purple vest-clad Australian Electoral Commission officials immediately outside the auditorium were kept busy by newly sworn-in Australians wanting to enrol to vote.

Anthony Albanese is due to call a federal poll within weeks.

Those sworn in on Thursday came from 60 different countries and ranged in age from two to 93. As he had done in ceremonies on the east coast, Mr Burke led the swearing-in process.

"In a few minutes time, Australia's going to be an even better country than it is right now, and that's because of you," the Home Affairs Minister told the audience.

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"In a few minute's time, your history, your heritage, your customs, your skills and your dreams for the future, they're all going to become part of Australia's story."

Each of the federal MPs at Thursday's event had an opportunity to address the new citizens.

Sam Lim, whose electorate of Tangney is the most marginal Labor-held seat in the state, recounted to the audience his own story of growing up in Malaysia with a mud floor, kerosene lighting and no toilet, before moving to Australia becoming a police officer and ultimately an MP.

Mr Goodenough faces an uphill task to be re-elected in the seat of Moore, but his preferences could well end up sending the electorate to Labor if he can secure enough of the primary vote. He too recounted his migration story, which saw him move to Perth from Singapore and succeed in business before entering politics.

Labor's strong result in the west at the 2022 federal election and the recent defection of Mr Goodenough mean there are no Liberal MPs in the Perth metropolitan area. Labor's ability to hold on to those gains in the west will go a long way to determining if the party can remain in government.

A Home Affairs spokesman said the Perth ceremony was one of 25 between February 17 and March 4. "The objective is to provide as many approved applicants as possible the opportunity to attend a ceremony and become an Australian citizen," he said.

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