

= Liberal Party of Australia leadership spill , 2009 =

A leadership spill of the federal parliamentary leader of the Liberal Party of Australia was held on 1 December 2009 . The incumbent , Malcolm Turnbull , was defeated by Tony Abbott in a three @-@ way vote of Liberal Party Members of Parliament (MPs) . Joe Hockey also stood as a candidate . Abbott thus became the Leader of the Opposition in the Parliament of Australia .

The spill was the culmination of a dispute within the Liberal Party over its response to the Rudd Government 's proposed emissions trading scheme (ETS) . Turnbull supported the introduction of an ETS and sought to negotiate amendments to government 's proposed legislation . Abbott came to represent many Liberal members of Parliament who were climate change sceptics or otherwise opposed the ETS . After Turnbull survived a spill motion (a motion to declare the leadership vacant) against his leadership in late November 2009 , Abbott declared his candidacy and a subsequent spill was moved on 1 December . Hockey ? a moderate who had been a supporter of Turnbull 's position on the ETS ? also stood . While Hockey had been expected to win , he was knocked out in the first round of voting . Abbott subsequently defeated Turnbull in the second round , 42 ? 41 .

= = Background = =

Malcolm Turnbull was elected to the House of Representatives in the 2004 federal election . In January 2007 he was appointed Minister for the Environment and Water Resources by Prime Minister John Howard . After the Australian Labor Party defeated the Howard government in the 2007 election , Turnbull , Brendan Nelson and Tony Abbott announced they would each contest the Liberal Party leadership . Nelson defeated Turnbull in a ballot after Abbott withdrew his candidacy . Turnbull became the Shadow Treasurer on Nelson 's frontbench .

Nelson 's leadership of the Liberal Party was beset by poor opinion poll numbers . There was speculation that Turnbull would challenge Nelson for the leadership in late 2008 ; however , Nelson caught Turnbull by surprise by calling a snap spill of the party 's leadership positions while Turnbull was returning from an overseas holiday . The spill was moved on 16 September 2008 . Turnbull defeated Nelson by four votes , becoming the leader of the Liberal Party and of the Opposition Coalition between the Liberals and the National Party . Nelson later resigned from the House of Representatives .

= = Climate change policy dispute = =

Turnbull was regarded as a " believer " in global warming . As Environment Minister , he had overseen the introduction of an emissions trading scheme (ETS) as a policy of the Liberal Party shortly before the Howard government 's defeat . However , many of Turnbull 's fellow MPs in the Coalition were climate change sceptics . Tensions within the Coalition on climate change policy had contributed to the downfall of Nelson 's leadership .

As leader of the Liberal Party , Turnbull supported the introduction of an ETS . In June 2009 , he indicated in principle support for an ETS proposed by the Rudd Government despite the opposition of his Coalition partner , the National Party . Turnbull subsequently outlined the Coalition 's position that it would oppose the ETS introduced to Parliament by the government , but would be open to negotiating an amended version .

Turnbull 's willingness to negotiate with the government was met with opposition from some Coalition MPs . By September 2009 , The Australian was reporting that only 12 of the 59 Liberal backbenchers supported negotiations . On 18 October 2009 , Turnbull fronted a meeting of Coalition MPs with a proposal to negotiate amendments to the government 's ETS . This meeting supported his proposal , in what was seen as a test of Turnbull 's leadership . However , there was speculation that a number of Coalition Senators would defy Turnbull and cross the floor of the Senate to vote against any ETS legislation . The ETS opponents argued that it would be premature for Parliament to pass ETS legislation before the Copenhagen Summit on climate change .

The divisions within the Coalition were laid bare in an episode of Four Corners , aired by the

Australian Broadcasting Corporation on 9 November 2009 . The program featured the Coalition 's leader in the Senate , Nick Minchin , suggesting that man @-@ made climate change was a conspiracy of the political left and disputing Turnbull 's authority to strike a deal with the government on the ETS . Later in the month , Minchin spoke against the ETS in the Senate . Abbott ? who had publicly supported the ETS ? was now arguing that the Coalition should abandon the policy . Turnbull attacked Abbott 's change of mind , stating : " Tony has expressed a number of views , each of which is at odds with the view he expressed before " .

On 23 November 2009 , the Coalition 's climate change spokesman Ian Macfarlane agreed to a deal with the government to amend the ETS legislation . The amendments provided industry with substantial compensation and exemptions from the ETS . Turnbull took the deal to Liberal MPs for formal approval , but a majority of backbenchers opposed it . Turnbull nonetheless claimed he had the Coalition 's support , by counting as supporters the 20 members of the Coalition Shadow Cabinet who he argued should be presumed to support the deal . This claim was met with rancour by his opponents in the Coalition .

Anger at Turnbull 's response to the 23 November 2009 meeting triggered a spill motion against his leadership three days later . The motion was moved by Kevin Andrews , a former Minister in the Howard government , but was defeated by a vote of 48 to 35 . Andrews was not seen as a genuine prospect for the leadership , so the close vote on the spill motion was considered a blow to Turnbull . While Abbott supported Turnbull at the time of Andrews ' spill , he subsequently resigned from the frontbench . Several others joined Abbott in resigning , including Nick Minchin , Eric Abetz , Sophie Mirabella and Tony Smith .

= = Abbott and Hockey challenges = =

Abbott announced on 27 November ? one day after Turnbull survived Kevin Andrews ' spill motion ? that he would challenge Turnbull for the leadership . Abbott committed to withdrawing his candidacy if Joe Hockey was to challenge . Abbott confirmed his opposition to the ETS legislation , questioning why Australia would legislate for a potentially detrimental economic measure before other countries had committed to do the same . A Newspan released on 30 November placed Hockey at 33 % , Turnbull at 30 % and Abbott at 19 % , when voters were asked who would be the " best person to lead " the Liberal Party . Speculation flourished that Hockey would challenge Turnbull , and Hockey consulted senior party dignitaries such as Howard and Costello about whether he should run .

Hockey faced a dilemma . A moderate in the Liberal Party , Hockey had been a consistent supporter of the ETS . Running against Turnbull would mean taking the leadership with the support of the party 's right wing and climate change sceptics . Turnbull seized on the dilemma , claiming Hockey had given Turnbull his " complete support " and was still a firm supporter of the ETS legislation .

Hockey attempted to resolve his dilemma by declaring that as leader he would allow a conscience vote on the ETS legislation . Abbott rejected Hockey 's declaration , and reneged on his earlier indication that he would withdraw his candidacy for Hockey . Abbott stated : " It now seems pretty clear we could change the leader to Joe and these offensive bills could still go through the Parliament " . On Hockey 's candidacy , Turnbull claimed that Hockey had pledged his opposition to the spill motion . However , it was expected that if the spill motion succeeded , Hockey would stand for the leadership against Turnbull and Abbott . Hockey was generally expected to win the ballot and become leader . To the end , Turnbull refused to stand aside as leader , insisting he would defeat the spill motion . Hockey later alleged that Turnbull had promised he would not stand against Hockey if the spill motion was successful . Turnbull denied that he had given , and therefore broken , any such undertaking .

= = Results = =

On 1 December 2009 , Liberal MPs convened to consider the spill motion to vacate the leadership .

The motion passed 48 ? 34 , following which Turnbull , Hockey and Abbott contested a ballot . Hockey was seen as the favourite to win the ballot , but was knocked out in the first round of voting , receiving 23 votes to Turnbull 's 26 and Abbott 's 35 . A second round of voting ensued , in which Abbott defeated Turnbull by one vote (42 ? 41) . Fran Bailey , a supporter of Turnbull , was absent for the vote , and there was one vote of " no " , which was recorded as informal .

Julie Bishop remained the deputy leader of the party , without being challenged for the position . Abbott thus became the third consecutive leader , after Nelson and Turnbull , for whom Bishop would serve as deputy . After the ballots , Bishop declared that she had voted for Turnbull , although Turnbull doubted her loyalty and Bishop resorted to proving it by retrieving her ballot papers .

= = = Ballots = = =

Spill motion to vacate leadership
Leadership ballot

= = Aftermath = =

Abbott said he was " humbled and daunted " by his unexpected election , while Hockey expressed surprise at his defeat . Upon his election , Abbott acknowledged his propensity for making controversial public statements ? which with his Catholicism and background as a trainee priest earned him the moniker of " the Mad Monk " ? and apologised for all his " errors of the past " . A week after the ballot , Abbott named his Shadow Cabinet . Hockey remained in the key position of Shadow Treasurer . Three Howard government veterans ? Kevin Andrews , Philip Ruddock and Bronwyn Bishop ? were recalled from the backbench , and outspoken National Party MP and climate change sceptic Barnaby Joyce was appointed to the shadow Finance portfolio . Turnbull voluntarily moved to the backbench .

Under Abbott 's leadership , the Liberal Party voted against the ETS legislation in the Senate on 3 December 2009 . Two Liberal Senators ? Judith Troeth and Sue Boyce ? crossed the floor to support the legislation . In February 2010 , Abbott outlined his alternative climate change policy , which would directly fund or subsidise emission reduction measures rather than cap emissions from industry .

Speaking in the House of Representatives in February 2010 , Turnbull attacked Abbott 's climate change policy and praised the government 's ETS legislation . He argued that Abbott 's subsidy @-@ based policy would be a " recipe for fiscal recklessness " . Turnbull later announced he would leave Parliament at the end of his term , before changing his mind within weeks . He claimed that his change of mind was the result of his anger at the government 's decision to delay its ETS legislation until 2013 . He denied being interested in regaining the leadership of the Liberal Party , saying " I don 't think there is any likelihood of that I assure you " . Turnbull subsequently gave qualified support to Abbott 's climate change policy , arguing that while it was inferior to an ETS in principle , it was preferable to the government 's approach of delaying action until 2013 . While it was the third leadership spill motion in three years , the Liberal Party did not attempt another spill motion for six years after , until the February 2015 leadership spill motion which was defeated 61 votes to 39 . In September 2015 , Malcolm Turnbull called for another spill , directly challenging Tony Abbott in a rematch between the two , and winning the vote 54 @-@ 44 to return to the position of leader of the Liberal Party , and as a result , displaced Abbott as Prime Minister of Australia .

For Hockey it is viewed that his failure to come up with a firm position on the ETS had blown what turned out to be his only chance to become Liberal leader in 2009 . When Prime Minister Tony Abbott 's leadership came under question in 2014 and 2015 , Hockey now Treasurer was not speculated as a potential successor to Abbott .