

Australian election 2022: Labor's Anthony Albanese vows to end 'climate wars' after defeating Scott Morrison

Mr Albanese says Australians have 'voted for change' as he is set to lead the first Labor government in nearly a decade

[Jamie Johnson](#) 22 May 2022 • 7:30am



[Anthony Albanese](#), Australia's new Labor prime minister, vowed to end the country's "climate wars" after he ousted Scott Morrison's conservative government on Saturday night.

For the first time in nearly a decade, the Labor party will lead Australia after a general election that delivered a bruising [defeat to Mr Morrison's Liberal-National coalition](#).

At the latest count on Sunday afternoon, Labor had won 72 seats - just four short of the half-way mark required to form a majority government in the 151-seat lower house.

It is likely that they will have to go into coalition with independents - who

performed particularly well - or the Greens Party to get over the line.

Mr Albanese, 59, is set to be sworn in as the country's 31st prime minister on Monday.

"I do want to change the country. I want to change the way that politics operates in this country," Mr Albanese told reporters after leaving a Sydney cafe on Sunday, where he was seen taking pictures with supporters.

Anthony Albanese meets with supporters after winning the general election Credit: AFP

Mr Morrison was seen leaving Kirribilli House in Sydney - Australia's official prime ministerial residence - with his family on Sunday morning.

The election was a stinging rebuke for Mr Morrison, who admitted it was a "difficult" and "humbling" night for his conservative coalition. He said he was standing down to make way for a new party leader.

His Liberals lost seats to Labor across the country, but they suffered the most painful defeat at the hands of climate-focused independent candidates in a string of once ultra-safe conservative urban constituencies.

Anthony Albanese, leader of Australia's Labor Party, celebrates his election victory alongside his partner, Jodie Haydon, and son, Nathan Albanese Credit: REUTERS/Jaimi Joy

Mr Albanese's supporters celebrate as the results are announced Credit: REUTERS/Jaimi Joy

At least four Liberal politicians appeared to have lost their seats to so-called "teal independents", including Josh Frydenberg, the deputy leader of the Liberal Party, who had been considered Mr Morrison's most likely successor.

The teals campaigned on demands for tougher action on climate change, a major political issue in Australia, which has suffered severe drought, catastrophic bushfires and major flooding in recent years.

Labor intends to cut its emissions by 43 per cent within the decade, well in excess of the Liberal Party's goal.

Mr Albanese issued a clarion call for action on climate change on Saturday night, saying: "Together we can end the climate wars. Together we can take advantage of the opportunity for Australia to be a renewable energy superpower."

Labor has also promised more financial assistance and a robust social safety net as Australia grapples with the highest inflation since 2001 and soaring housing prices.

Other plans include increasing minimum wages, and establishing a Pacific defence school to train neighboring armies in response to China's potential military presence in the Solomon Islands on Australia's doorstep.

Congratulations [@AlboMP](#) on your election as Prime Minister of Australia.

I look forward to working with you as we reap the rewards of our comprehensive Free Trade Agreement, the AUKUS partnership and the unmatched closeness between the British and Australian people.



— Boris Johnson (@BorisJohnson) [May 21, 2022](#)

[British Prime Minister Boris Johnson](#) was the first world leader to congratulate Mr Albanese on his election victory. "Our countries have a long history and a bright future together," he said.

Voting in Australia is compulsory, enforced with a \$20 (£11) fine - but many voters were rewarded with a "democracy sausage" as booths across the country fired up barbecues.

With 68.3 per cent of the vote counted on Sunday afternoon, Labor had 72 seats, the Liberal-National coalition held 51, while independents and the

Greens held 15, the Australian Broadcasting Corp projected. A further 13 seats remained in doubt.

Mr Albanese, one of the country's longest-serving politicians, used his victory speech to vow to unite the country and turn the page on nearly 10 years of conservative rule.

A man casts his vote during Australia's general election at a polling station at Bondi Beach in Sydney Credit: STEVEN SAPHORE /AFP

"We are the greatest country on earth, but we can have an even better future if we seize the opportunities that are right there in front of us," Mr Albanese told supporters to rapturous applause.

"Together we can end the climate wars. Together we can take advantage of the opportunity for Australia to be a renewable energy superpower."

His speech was continually interrupted by rowdy Labor supporters, prompting him to call for calm. "I intend to run an orderly government and it starts here, so behave," he said.

He once again made reference his family story and his difficult upbringing, which he has cited as a key influence on his politics.

"It says a lot about our great country that a son of a single mom who was a disability pensioner, who grew up in public housing down the road in Camperdown can stand before you tonight as Australia's prime minister," he said.

Anthony Albanese thanked his late mother in his victory speech on Saturday, saying that she was 'beaming down on us' Credit: WENDELL TEODORO/AFP/Getty Images

Mr Albanese's Italian-born father, Carlo, met his Irish-Australian mother, Maryanne, on a cruise ship. The couple separated after Maryanne became pregnant.

Mr Albanese grew up believing his father had died in a road accident. Only later was he told that Carlo was still alive in Italy. Both of his parents have since died.

He ended his speech thanking his party colleagues, campaign team, family, and finally his mother who he said was "beaming down on us".

"Every parent wants more for the next generation than they had. My mother dreamt of a better life for me. And I hope that my journey in life inspires Australians to reach for the stars," he said.

Anthony Albanese's supporters cheer as he delivers his victory speech in Sydney Credit: AP Photo/Rick Rycroft

Mr Albanese's political sympathies emerged at an early age. At the age of seven he was handing out leaflets for Gough Whitlam, one of Labor's most respected prime ministers.

One of his favourite stories is based on an experience during his teenage years when the local council considered selling the housing estate where he lived. The residents campaigned against the plan and eventually won.

"It was a battle that was fundamental to my identity and critical to the person I am today," he revealed in an interview.

After leaving school he became involved in the Labor Left while studying economics at Sydney University. He later served as assistant secretary in the New South Wales Labor Party.

As the new Australian prime minister, one of his first commitments will be a visit to Tokyo early next week to attend the Quad talks with India, Japan and the United States.

Mr Albanese poses with a supporter and dogs at a polling station Credit: WENDELL TEODORO /AFP

It will be a key opportunity to strengthen Australia's relationship with US President Joe Biden, who will also be in attendance.

Mr Albanese believes Australia has been placed in the "naughty corner" in United Nations' climate change negotiations by refusing to adopt more ambitious climate emissions targets. That policy is likely to change under his administration.

"One of the ways that we increase our standing in the region, and in particular in the Pacific, is by taking climate change seriously," he told the National Press Club in Canberra earlier this year.