

Vision Audit of the  
Two Main Candidates in  
the 2010 Australia General Election



Audit Document  
Completed by the Foundation for Democratic  
Advancement (August, 2010)

Purpose: Determine a ranking and grades for two main candidates for the 2010 Australia General Election based on their visions for Australia, and in terms of the better representative of the Australia as a whole.

This determination is an outside perspective to give the citizens of Australia an informed different perspective of two candidates running for the 2010 Australian Prime Minister.

The views in this Evaluation/Ranking/Grading are the views of the FDA. Also, the Determination is an example of a way to inform voters in the selection of political candidates--through evaluating, ranking and grading.

The two main candidates for the 2010 Australian General election:

Julia Gillard (Australian Labor Party)  
Tony Abbot (Liberal Party of Australia)

\* Though there are other candidates and parties running in the election, the FDA due to lack of information on the other Candidates and time constraints limited its evaluation to two top candidates. However, the study should give an indication of the quality of the candidates running in the Australian General election, and the legitimacy of the election.

The FDA and its members are in no way affiliated with any of the candidates in this study.

The study represents an independent assessment of two top Australian candidates based on objectivity, transparency, and non-partisanship.

The FDA is confident that its vision audit results will give a picture of the quality (or lack of quality) of two top Australian candidates, and a sense of the legitimacy of the actual election results.

Methodology for Evaluating, Ranking, and Grading of the Australian candidates:

Vision: (What is the overall outlook/direction for the future of Australia, and to what degree does it represent the best interests of the people of Australia?)

Weighting:

The two candidates can receive a score from 0 to 10.

Evaluation:

Evaluate the visions based on what is in the better interests of the Australian people.

The FDA will perform an analytical review. The evaluation will have a stated rationale for the scoring/ranking.

The FDA's evaluation methodology is objective and transparent. Though like any evaluation methodology there is an element of subjectivity.

The FDA minimizes this subjectivity by being guided by the more sound reasons. Every score and grade will be justified based on reasons for and against, and ultimately the more sound reason in a particular context.

Chief Auditor:

Stephen Garvey, Executive Director of the FDA

**Principle information sources:**

Media articles and analysis of candidates. Candidates' statements, including policy promises. Speeches by the candidates.

---

## Table of Contents:

Policy area:

Vision

Overall Totals

Analysis

Conclusion

Appendix

## Vision:

What is the overall outlook/direction for the future of Australia, and to what degree does it represent the best interests of the people of Australia?

Julia Gillard

### **Together, Let's move Australia forward**

#### **A Positive Plan to Move Australia Forward**

As I've travelled around Australia, I've constantly been reminded of one thing: day in and day out, our people work for their families, their communities and their country, and they do so very hard.

Australians play by the rules, set their alarms early, get their kids off to school, and work hard to provide for their family.

This election I've worked hard to lay out a positive plan for the future of Australia.

It's a plan to build a stronger economy, provide more jobs, provide better health, better education, invest in infrastructure, and ensure a fairer and more sustainable society for all.

I believe Australians deserve better than the backward vision that has been presented by Mr Abbott.

We're better than that, we are a confident, optimistic people, and together, let's show it this Saturday.

Only Julia Gillard has a positive plan to move our economy forward with business tax cuts, a National Broadband Network, and fully costed promises.

FDA Summary: build a strong economy together through business tax cuts, national broadband network, fully costed promises. Reactionary to Liberal party. No overall vision what Australia represents now or in the future. No long-term vision.

Tony Abbot

Stand up for Australia. Stand up for real action.

**End Labor's waste and restore cabinet government**

**The Hon Tony Abbott Leader of the Opposition**

Labor has wasted too much taxpayers' money.

The Coalition won't repeat Labor's disastrous 'pink batts' program.

The Coalition will also stop the billions of dollars being wasted through the 'school halls' program, and cut spending on government advertising.

Bad processes produce bad decisions.

Unlike Labor where decisions are made without proper process or consultation, the Coalition will restore the decision-making processes of Cabinet to restore integrity to government decision-making.

FDA Summary: reduce government spending and restore decision-making process of Cabinet. No overall vision of what Australia represents now or in the future.

Reactionary to the Labor party. No long-term vision.

Scores: Gillard	Abbot
5/10	6/10

Julia Gillard (Australian Labor Party)  
Tony Abbot (Liberal Party of Australia)

Rational for scores:

Gillard envisions a more active government with some financial responsibility, while Abbot envisions a reduced government with better decision-making. Both visions are short-term, and lack an overall vision for Australians. Moreover, both visions are promoting a stronger Australian government, but through different means—careful government expansion versus government contraction.

Australia is not a country onto itself. And the world economy is struggling in its recovery from a worldwide recession. Therefore, it follows that Liberal conservative is likely better in the short-term for Australians.

Both Gillard and Abbot's visions were general to Australians and lacked a long-term, overall perspective. Therefore, their scores for vision are mediocre. Abbot received a higher score, because his vision with reduced government and better government decision-making is more reasonable considering the troubling global economy.

## Overall Ranking:

### Visions

1. Abbot 6/10 60%
2. Gillard 5/10 50%

The lower the grade, the less satisfactory the candidate is. The higher the grade, the more satisfactory the candidate is.

## Analysis:

The Australian electoral audit was limited to vision, and therefore, the ranking of Abbot and Gillard is limited as well. However, the visions of the candidates, and their respective quality, should give a give reasonable idea as to what these candidates offer Australians, because vision represents what a candidate offers overall.



## Conclusion:

Considering the low scores for visions for Gillard and Abbot, Australians should not expect much from these candidates.

Moreover, Australian democracy is dominated by a two party democracy made up of the Liberal Party of Australia and Australian Labor Party. Hence, the poor visions of Gillard and Abbot are amplified. (In the 2007 Australian General election for example , the Labor party won 43.38% of the vote, Liberal party 36.61%, and with the nearest other party, the National Party, 5.49%.)

Australians should strive to break the two-party hierarchy, thereby allow more parties, with differing perspectives, to have an opportunity to govern Australia.

In the context of the FDA audits for vision in the 2010 British General election and 2008 US presidential election, all the candidates had mediocre scores for visions, except for Nader who scored 100% and Brown who scored 70%. However, Nader not being part of the US two-party hierarchy was sidelined in the US political process receiving only .5% of the US vote. Brown and his British Labor party lost the 2010 election, and his vision was offset by his poor incumbency record and the decline of the British economy. The British voters with little to choose from overall gave support to the short-term economic outlook of the British Conservatives and Liberal Democrats.

### **Actual election results:**

The 2010 Australia General Election resulted in a hung parliament, which means no party attained a majority of the seats in the Australian parliament. This result is consistent with the FDA audit, which shows the leading candidates, Gillard and Abbot, to be mediocre in terms of their visions for Australia. Moreover, a hung parliament will force the Australian Labor party and the Liberal Party of Australia to form coalitions with other parties and independents, thus allow greater representation of the Australian people and at the same time, weaken the Australian two-party hierarchical political system.

## Appendix:

### Results for Candidate's visions from the 2010 British General Election, and 2008 US Presidential Election

#### 2010 British General Election:

##### Vision:

What is the overall outlook/direction for the future of Britain, and to what degree does it represent the best interests of the people of Britain?

Brown: "Fighting for your future"

Our vision for a future fair for all

To deliver a future fair for all we need to:

- Rebuild our economy
- Reform and protect our public services
- Renew our politics

##### Cameron

#### **Contract between the Conservative Party and the people The Conservative Manifesto 2010**

A country is at its best when the bonds between people are strong and when the sense of national purpose is clear. Today the challenges facing Britain are immense. Our economy is overwhelmed by debt, our social fabric is frayed and our political system has betrayed the people. But these problems can be overcome if we pull together and work together. If we remember that we are all in this together.

Some politicians say: 'give us your vote and we will sort out all your problems'.

We say: real change comes not from government alone. Real change comes when the people are inspired and mobilized, when millions of us are fired up to play a part in the nation's future.

Yes this is ambitious. Yes it is optimistic. But in the end all the Acts of Parliament, all the new measures, all the new policy initiatives, are just politicians' words without you and your involvement.

How will we deal with the debt crisis unless we understand that we are all in this together? How will we raise responsible children unless every adult plays their part? How will we revitalize communities unless people stop asking 'who will fix this?' and start asking 'what can I do?'

Britain will change for the better when we all elect to take part, to take responsibility – if we all come together. Collective strength will overpower our problems.

Only together can we get rid of this government and, eventually, its debt. Only together can we get the economy moving. Only together can we protect the NHS. Improve our schools. Mend our broken society. Together we can even make politics and politicians work better. And if we can do that, we can do anything. Yes, together we can do anything.

So my invitation today is this: join us, to form a new kind of government for Britain.

Clegg

Change that works for you

Building a fairer Britain

Fair Deal

Fair Taxes

Fair Future

Fair Chance

Brown Cameron Clegg

Score 7/10 6/10 6.5/10

Rationale: Brown has the most comprehensive vision for Britain, because he defines a goal/direction and states how to attain it. Clegg's vision, though similar to Brown's, is somewhat incoherent in terms of attaining the vision. Cameron's vision lacks a motivating force to bring people together, thereby make the vision reality. Cameron's simply states that all British people are in it together; yet not everyone may feel united for example with Cameron's Conservatives.

## 2008 US Presidential Election

### Vision for America

#### John McCain

Country first before anything else  
Keep nation prosperous, strong and growing  
More independence from foreign oil sources  
Make health care more accessible  
Continue war in Iraq and Afghanistan until successful

#### Barack Obama

Claimed change in the policies of federal government and politics of Washington  
Help the lower income bracket of America—health care reform, tax cuts  
Continue war in Afghanistan  
Unite America by overcoming divisions like race  
Fix the economy  
Improve America's reputation abroad with less unilateralism  
Change unclear? Political—Obama received millions in donations.  
(Policies differ very little from McCain's)

#### Ralph Nader

Shift the power in America from “corporate interests’ and corporate governments’ autocratic control” to the American people.  
National health care  
Secure a living wage for workers

#### Bob Barr

Less government in all aspects of federal government whether foreign policy or the economy.  
Less government from Barr's standpoint translates into a more prosperous, functioning society.

#### Chuck Baldwin

An independent America from foreign ownership in any form in the US  
“a free sovereign, republic” emphasis on individual liberty, less government  
freedom of choice within market protection of America—America first policy

### Vision Evaluation:

Basis for evaluation: Leadership--identifies issues and act on them, vision, strength to carry through, independent yet team player, and strong communication with public.

Score	McCain	Obama	Nader	Barr	Baldwin
	5/10	5/10	10/10	6/10	4/10

Rational: Nader's vision for a shift in power from corporate interests to the American people is on target for the source of America's internal problems; McCain and Obama's visions are general and obvious; Barr's vision of less government is sound, but not complete (viz., less government is not the answer to America's problems; Baldwin's protectionism is counter productive to America's interests and the global direction of the world.