

## **Labor Party 'golden haired boy' Bill Shorten Avoids 'opposition' leadership like the Plague**

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### **Who wouldn't at this stage?**

*If nothing else Shorten knows that timing is everything -- good move Bill!*

*Readers will derive much mirth from watching Shorten's pained attempts to AVOID the leadership at this stage of the game.*



***'Dream run,' Bill Shorten will lead when he decides***

### **Who wants to be Opposition Leader?**

The Labor Party is keen to put the Rudd/Gillard era behind it, but speculation over the party leadership continues.

Former leader Kevin Rudd has yet to say if he'll quit politics altogether - a move some say is vital if the party is to move on.

A number of front-runners have ruled themselves out of the race but as Thea Cowie reports it could be weeks before Australians know who will be the new Opposition Leader.

The "dance of death" is how some have described the years of instability, conflict and division within the Labor Party under Julia Gillard and Kevin Rudd.

Newly-retired former Climate Change Minister Greg Combet has told the ABC Labor can only make a fresh start if Kevin Rudd bows out of politics altogether.

"I think whoever takes over as leader of the Labor Party in opposition, they cannot afford to be looking over their shoulder and finding Kevin Rudd behind there."

Former Treasurers Chris Bowen and Wayne Swan, and former Foreign Affairs Minister Bob Carr, have all ruled themselves out of the leadership race.

Mr Bowen says he's thought long and hard about taking on the role, but has decided he's not the best person to lead the party.

He is however open to serving as Opposition treasury spokesman or even deputy Opposition leader.

Mr Bowen won't say who he'd like to see as leader.

"That's a matter for the individuals concerned. It's a matter for the party. I think the Labor Party is blessed with a talented team. Obviously there's been names mentioned as potential candidates as well as mine and I think all of those potential candidates are people of great talent and ability and they, I know, are going through the same process that I've gone through in the last 24 hours to consider their options and they'll make their own plans know in their own good time."

The two favourites for the leadership - Anthony Albanese and Bill Shorten - are yet to reveal their intentions.

Mr Shorten has the backing of senior Labor figures - including retiring former Minister Simon Crean, and former Queensland Premier Peter Beattie.

46-year-old Mr Shorten says his family will feature largely in his deliberations, and he's indicated he'd prefer to run for the leadership unopposed.

He was touted as a future leader even before he entered parliament in 2007.

He's served as financial services, workplace relations and education minister and was seen as one of the so-called "faceless men" involved in the ousting of both Prime Ministers Kevin Rudd and Julia Gillard.

The other main contender, Anthony Albanese, is the outgoing deputy Prime Minister.

Those supporting him include former Defence Minister Stephen Smith.

Mr Albanese has told Sky News there are plenty of talented people who could take over the leadership.

"Bill of course would make a great Labor leader. There's a number of people who I think ... // Reporter: Are you happy to serve as him with leader? // I'd be happy to serve with whoever the caucus choses and be loyal to them. The fact is that we have a number of talented people in the Labor Party caucus: Bill Shorten, Tony Burke, Chris Bowen, // Reporter: Anthony Albanese? // Tanya Plibersek. There are a range of good experienced people who can serve the party."

Those wanting to run for the party leadership will have to nominate at the next Labor caucus meeting which could be held this week, or next.

If at that meeting more than one politician puts their hand up for the leadership, it could take several more weeks for a winner to emerge.

Under new caucus rules announced by Mr Rudd in July, the leadership would go to a ballot - with 50 per cent weighting to the votes of federal Labor politicians and 50 per cent to Labor Party members.

Victorian federal Labor MP Kelvin Thomson is warning Labor's problems won't disappear once the issue of leadership is settled.

"I would be wary of people saying that disunity is the only problem and provided that we unite

behind the next leader and everybody just falls into lock step behind the next leader that that will solve all our problems. It is my view that we will get better outcomes if we are more democratic, if there is more opportunity for consultation, more opportunity for parliamentarians to have their say, for the ordinary Labor Party members to have their say."

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