

**NANNIES
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Labor support slumps to the pits

Exclusive

Louise Dodson

Labor's primary vote has collapsed following passage of the carbon and mining taxes through Parliament, a leadership challenge by Kevin Rudd and a crushing blow to the party in the Queensland election.

As the federal government prepares to deliver a crucial budget, *The Australian Financial Review's* Nielsen poll also shows that Wayne Swan is trailing his opposition

PRIMARY VOTE		TWO-PARTY PREFERRED		PREFERRED TREASURER	
Labor	27% -7▼	Labor	43% -4▼	Wayne Swan	43%
Coalition	47% +3▲	Coalition	57% +4▲	Joe Hockey	45%

counterpart Joe Hockey as preferred treasurer, especially in Queensland, Mr Swan's home state.

This follows Mr Swan's high-profile attack on mining billionaires

Andrew Forrest, Gina Rinehart and Clive Palmer as he sought to promote the minerals resource rent tax and his essay in *The Monthly*, seen by some as evoking class warfare.

In the run-up to the May 8 budget, the poll finds that the Coalition is by far regarded as the party best able to handle the economy.

The poll will be a major blow to Labor strategists who have been working to refocus attention on the government's agenda and its ability to manage the economy after Prime Minister Julia Gillard was able to see off decisively the leadership challenge of former foreign minister Kevin Rudd in late February.

Labor's vote has dived 7 percentage points to 27 per cent while

support for the Coalition rose three points to 47 per cent, opening up a massive 20-point difference on primary votes.

This is very close to the 26 per cent – the worst score for Labor in 40 years of Nielsen polls – seen in July last year just after the government introduced its carbon tax into Parliament.

The two-party preferred vote was Coalition 57 per cent, up four points, **Continued page 8**

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Big banks push for 'notional' weekends

Exclusive

Mark Skulley and Pip Freebairn

Australia's major banks are pushing for the definition of ordinary working hours to be extended to include Saturday afternoons and all of Sundays, in a bid to improve flexibility of rostering employees on weekends.

In a joint application to an award review by Fair Work Australia, the banks argue the changes would promote "flexible and efficient modern work practices in a way that has proper regard to the considerations of productivity and employment costs".

While the banks – ANZ, Commonwealth Bank, Westpac and GE Capital Finance – say they will retain penalty rates, unions argue the application is a precursor to cutting pay and dismantling the weekend.

Debate about the weekend comes

as the banks are under pressure to respond to demand for real-time payments and 24/7 service. It also comes as other big employers in retail and hospitality lobby the industrial tribunal to lower penalty rates, which they argue make local industry uncompetitive and are exacerbating weakness in parts of the economy.

The four banks, which employ a combined 150,000 people, argue in the application that they are in the same position as retailers, telecommunications service providers and call centre operators yet have less flexibility to roster employees on Saturdays and Sundays.

The Finance Sector Union blasted the application, arguing it aimed to establish a "notional weekend" where employees could be rostered to work any five days of the week without recognising traditional work patterns.

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Highly rated ... Seven West Media's David Leckie, right, and Tim Worner last week.

Photo: MICHELE MOSSOP

Leckie: Seven ate Nine and Ten

Exclusive

James Chessell

The fourth season of *MasterChef Australia* will be a flop. Tim Worner deserves most of the credit for Seven's ratings dominance. And "I just want to keep doing it until the board says goodbye".

So says Seven West Media chief executive David Leckie. In a typically robust interview with *The Australian Financial Review*, the veteran

executive predicts Seven will continue a record-breaking ratings performance in 2012 that has seen the network grab the lion's share of the \$3 billion capital city free-to-air television advertising market.

With Seven's blockbuster cooking program *My Kitchen Rules* finishing last week – Tuesday's final show topped 2.8 million metropolitan viewers – competition among the free-to-air networks will heat up after Easter. Nine is launching a talent show, *The Voice*, and Ten Network

broadcasting new series of *MasterChef* and *Offspring*.

"We've never, ever been in better shape," says Leckie. "Not bad for an old fart."

Seven has not lost an official ratings week since September 2010 and Leckie is confident this run will continue until Nine broadcasts the London Olympics in late July.

Having four AFL games a week

Continued page 47

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British MP urges UK piracy probe

A senior Labour MP has called on the British Home Office to investigate payments to police by NDS, a subsidiary of News Corp. The *Financial Review* revealed on March 30 that a security unit within NDS had run a fund for "Police/Informants". Tom Watson said the UK police watchdog should investigate the relationship between News Corp and the police.

INSIDE TODAY

There is dastardly behaviour and it is from the pirates. It is not from News Corp, News Ltd nor from NDS.

Kim Williams: Letters, page 51
It is not just this masthead that considers this to be a legitimate story.

Michael Stutchbury: Opinion, page 54
Pay TV piracy reports pages 6, 7

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