NATIONAL

Why Anthony Albanese's public image needs work, as veteran Labor strategists reveals his chances of success

Anthony Albanese will need a public image overhaul if he wants to win at the polls in 2022, with an expert revealing he "wouldn't stand a chance" if Scott Morrison called a snap election.

David Aidone, News Corp Australia Network

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May 27, 2019. Incoming Labor leader Anthony Albanese speaks to media in Sydney about his histor...

New Labor leader Anthony Albanese "wouldn't stand a chance" if a snap election was called, as

the Labor Party desperately try to rebuild following their spectacular loss at the polls.

Body language and speech expert Michael Kelly told News Corp Australia Mr Albanese needed a public image overhaul if he wanted to engage the Australian public.

Mr Kelly — who has worked with business leaders and politicians across his long-spanning career — said the NSW left wing powerbroker needed to put everything from his articulation, to his gestures under the microscope.

But it's not all bad news for the Opposition's head honcho, with a veteran Labor campaign strategist revealing why Mr Albanese could lead the party to victory at the 2022 federal election.



Mr Albanese needs a public image overhaul if he wants to engage the Australian public, says a body language and speech expert. Picture: AAP

Mr Kelly said the Labor leader had made a bad impression in his first speech, describing it as "uninspiring" and "stilted".

"His face was flat, the voice was plodding and monotone, he was looking down at his notes," Mr Kelly said.

He said Mr Albanese's tendency to speak in staccato, and inability to properly connect speech and body language painted him as amateur.

"Short sentences can be effective. But when he appears rushed ... if you're perceived as rushing that's junior behaviour. If you're perceived as owning time, that's perceived as senior behaviour," he said.

"This is something Scott Morrison does so much better."

As well bringing some animation into his speech, Mr Kelly said the Labor leader needed to work on his facial expressions. But in some areas, he outperformed Bill Shorten.

"In one debate (before the federal election) Bill Shorten was slouching. He wasn't looking at Scott Morrison. And that contributes to a shifty image," he said.

"Albanese is not as bad as that. But I'd urge him to make sure he doesn't cross his hands. He should try and keep an open posture."



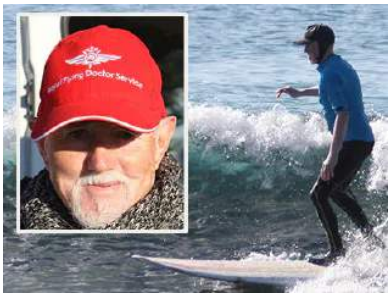
Mr Kelly said the new Labor leader wouldn't have a chance in a debate if a snap federal election was called. Picture: AAP



There were times during leadership debates that Bill Shorten came across as "shifty", Mr Kelly said. Picture: AFP

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Mr Kelly said Mr Albanese came across more earnest than Mr Shorten, but added he would not be able to take



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on Scott Morrison in a debate if a snap election was called.

"He wouldn't stand a chance," he said.

However, the "arrogant" nature of many politicians meant image training was often turned down, Mr Kelly said.

But veteran Labor campaign strategist Bruce Hawker was more glowing in his assessment of Mr Albanese.

Mr Hawker — who was behind Kevin Rudd's hugely successful Kevin 07 campaign — said it was far too early to judge Mr Albanese on such qualities.

He said voters needed to look at his past performance as a senior politician.

"He's somebody who has demonstrated he has the capacity to talk directly to people in a way that doesn't alienate them and is authentic," Mr Hawker said.



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He explained Mr Albanese needed to get his team in order, and ensure the public understood controversial election policies — such as amendments to franking credits — were off the table.

The campaign mastermind said while Mr Albanese's heart mate may be on the political left, his head was firmly in the centre, and that was of significant benefit.

"He is not going to allow himself, or his party to get carried away the grand sweep of policy changes," he said.

"Labor leaders are at their best when they position themselves at the political centre."

He added the key to a Labor leaders' success was to be bigger than their party.

"There's always a reluctance from the electorate to embrace Labor from opposition," he said.

"But I think Albanese can demonstrate to the public that although the party might have some views that are out of keeping with mainstream politics, he is bigger than the party and will put the Australian public first."

When News Corp Australia asked Mr Albanese about whether he thought his public image needed improvement, his spokesperson pointed to his comment "what you see is what you get".