



The fall and rise of a PM



THE biggest week in Australian politics since Kevin Rudd's November 2007 election victory started on June 21 with Radio National breakfast host Fran Kelly interviewing journalist Lenore Taylor about her new book, *Shitstorm*. Co-written with another respected journalist, David Uren, Taylor's book is a behind-the-scenes account of the Rudd government's response to the global financial crisis. Spookily, its final sentence predicts that a "political shitstorm may be wilder and more damaging than Kevin Rudd ever imagined".

The dramatic events surrounding Julia Gillard's ascension to the prime minister's office three days later could have sent *Shitstorm* to the abyss of the bookshop's remainders bin; suddenly, a topical new book that focused on a popular PM's early days in office and the economic course set by the tight-knit "kitchen cabinet" of Rudd, Gillard, Treasurer Wayne Swan and Finance Minister Lindsay Tanner was out-of-date. Could it survive the political maelstrom that had so quickly and comprehensively knocked out its central character, Rudd?

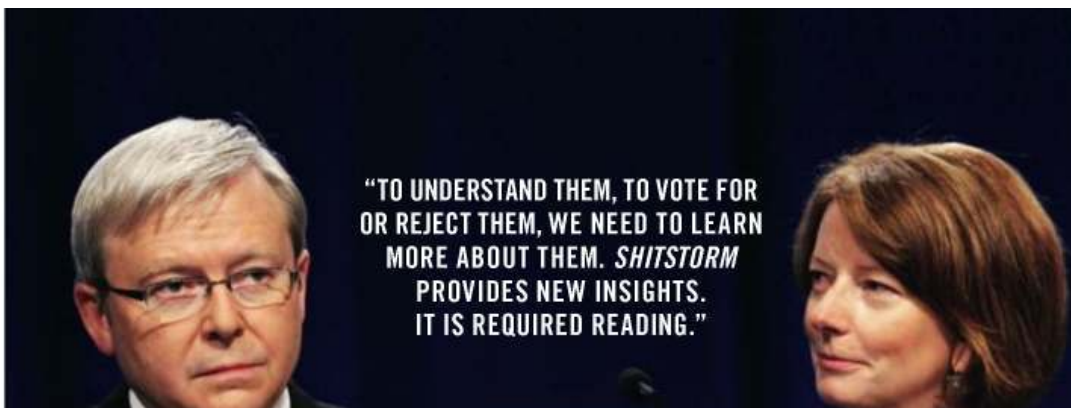
My view is that unlike a lot of political books that lose their traction when a particular landscape changes, *Shitstorm* still has enormous relevance. Taylor and Uren combine more than 50 years' experience covering Australian politics and economics. Their knowledge is immense, but so are their contact books. Their reconstruction of events from 2007 to mid-2010 relies on the big guns' recollections, as well as media reports of the day. All these contributions from politicians, economists,

bankers and business leaders help to create a significant document of record.

Shitstorm also serves as an excellent backgrounder to the forthcoming federal election. Power shifts have occurred, Tanner has announced his decision to leave politics, and already the government is a different beast under its new PM. But many of the book's key players – Gillard, Swan, Tony Abbott, Malcolm Turnbull, treasury secretary Ken Henry, Reserve Bank governor Glenn Stevens and others – are still on Australia's centre stage. To understand them, to vote for or reject them, we need to learn more about them. *Shitstorm* provides new insights. It is required reading. \

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**SHITSTORM:
INSIDE LABOR'S
DARKEST DAYS**
\$34.99

by Lenore Taylor
and David Uren
(Melbourne
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