

LINDA BURNEY

Making history

As the state of the nation hangs in the balance since the federal election, one Sydney woman has bucked all the trends

"It is just remarkable," Burney tells WHO of her historic win.



"Australians would have no doubt preferred a clearer outcome," said Malcolm Turnbull.



Opposition Leader Bill Shorten declared, "Labor is back."

As an Aboriginal woman who grew up in Australia in the 1950s and '60s, Linda Burney knows what hardship looks like. An unwanted baby, Burney was raised amid poverty and stifling racism. "She once had a white lady say to her when she was 12 years old, 'You'll never amount to anything,'" said former senator Bob Carr on the campaign trail in June. "Linda is proving that person wrong."

And how. Amid the uncertainty of one of the tightest-ever vote counts, Burney, 59, made history on July 2, becoming the first Indigenous woman to be voted to the House of Representatives. It was a rare moment of clarity in an election that at press time still hung on a knife's edge. "I have to say I hadn't fully appreciated how happy and proud this would make thousands of people," the Labor member tells WHO. "I have had thousands of messages from around Australia."

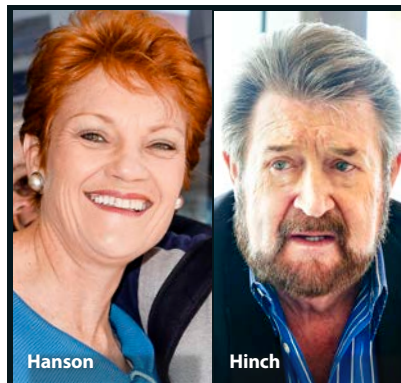
It's not the first time she has shattered a glass ceiling. In 2003, Burney, who has an adult daughter and

son, became the first Aboriginal elected to the NSW Parliament. And in winning Barton, she is also the first woman to be elected to that Sydney seat. "It was just amazing to see the community embrace the idea that this electorate had the potential to make history," says Burney, whose husband, Rick Farley, died in 2006. "It's been extraordinary."

Her triumph follows a life of misfortune. Born to folk singer Nonnie Ingram and an unmarried white woman (she relinquished custody of the baby, but the pair later

made contact), Burney was age 27 when she first met her father. She taught high school in western Sydney, and after entering politics education remained her passion. "The community wants to be cared about," she says, adding that politicians "have lost sight of the community."

As for her take on the future of the government, Burney was at press time predicting a hung parliament: "If it isn't and the Turnbull government is able to form a minority government, I cannot see it surviving." ■



Hanson

Hinch

FAMILIAR FACES

Nearly two decades after losing her seat in federal parliament, Pauline Hanson has made her comeback. At press time, her One Nation party had up to two Senate seats, possibly more. Hanson, 62, said the major parties "are clearly out of touch with the Australian people." Another famous face, New Zealand-born broadcaster Derryn Hinch, 72, also an incoming senator, has attacked Hanson's anti-Islam policies. "We have very little in common," he said.