

Australia's Turnbull Ousts Prime Minister Tony Abbott in Leadership Ballot



Canberra, September 14 (RHC)-- Australia's ruling Liberal Party has voted out beleaguered Prime Minister Tony Abbott in favor of longtime rival Malcolm Turnbull in a party leadership battle.

Turnbull, a multi-millionaire former banker and tech entrepreneur, won the vote by 54 to 44 at the party meeting in order to become the nation's 29th prime minister. Foreign Minister Julie Bishop was also elected deputy leader of the party after beating Kevin Andrews by 70 votes to 30.

Turnbull, a major challenger to the premier, and Bishop had earlier asked Abbott to allow the party to hold a leadership contest. Abbott had also survived an internal challenge to his leadership seven months ago. Premier Abbott has been plagued by poor opinion polls in recent months.

Turnbull is set to become Australia's fourth prime minister in just over two years. He is expected to be sworn in after Abbott writes to the Governor General and resigns. The developments come as ruling conservative party attempts to win back a disenchanted public by replacing the nation's polarizing leader with his more moderate rival.

Earlier on Monday, Turnbull said at a press conference in Canberra that if Abbott remained as leader, the coalition government would lose the next election. Turnbull emphasized that the government needed a "new style of leadership."

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