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## **PM WOULD LOSE HIS SEAT: CRIKEY-MORGAN POLL**

Prime Minister John Howard would lose his own seat of Bennelong if a federal election was held today, the Crikey-Morgan Poll has found.

A majority of voters in John Howard's own electorate say Kevin Rudd would be a better prime minister – and 38 per cent of the PM's own constituents say he should retire before the federal election.

The findings come from a telephone poll of 394 Bennelong electors conducted by Roy Morgan Research on the nights of February 14/15, 2007 to be released in today's national [crikey.com.au](http://crikey.com.au) email newsletter.

Labor support in Bennelong is running at 55 per cent on a two party preferred basis, compared with 45 per cent for the Liberal Party,

Forty per cent of Bennelong electors would give their first preference to the Prime Minister (down 9.9 per cent since the last election). Forty one per cent would cast a primary vote for Labor (up 12.6 per cent since 2004), 11 per cent for the Greens and five per cent for others. Only a low three per cent of voters were undecided.

A higher proportion of Bennelong voters say Labor leader Kevin Rudd would be a better Prime Minister than Mr Howard – 49 to 47 per cent.

More Bennelong electors disapprove of the way Mr Howard is handling his job as Prime Minister than approve – 47 to 44 per cent. In contrast, 75 per cent approve of the job Mr Rudd is doing as Opposition Leader, compared to just 11 per cent who disapprove and 14 per cent who can't say.

"Bennelong will be a front line seat in this year's federal election," Crikey political editor Christian Kerr said. "A redistribution of the electoral boundaries in NSW last year cut John Howard's margin down to just four per cent.

"Demography may also be working against the PM. Bennelong has seen a rapid influx of new, mostly Asian, migrants in the past decade. Some observers say these new electors are more likely to vote Labor.

"There just one small silver lining for the Prime Minister. Forty six per cent of Bennelong voters still think the Coalition will win the next election – 38 per cent back the ALP – and he can delay it until the end of the year."

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