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ScoMotion: Stop nodding, start smiling, body language experts tell Scott Morrison



by [Patrick Durkin](#)

Scott Morrison needs to stop "nodding his head backwards" in the style of Peter Costello and learn to properly smile if he hopes to win the [federal election](#), body and language experts urge.

Speech experts expressed relief that Peter Dutton – variously described by them as wooden-faced, dead-eyed and uninspiring – was [not victorious](#).

They also applauded Malcolm Turnbull for an extraordinary and stately speech [on Friday](#) in his final address as prime minister.

Organisational psychologist Leanne Faraday-Brash said Mr Morrison struck a good tone and forward vision in his first speech as PM but there is work to do.

"He looked straight into the camera at middle Australia sitting on their couches in the first 90 seconds," she said.

"He was authoritative and portraying an air of self-confidence without any hint of smugness. He leaned back on the podium in a casual conversational style and used casual language that we're on your side and to have a go, get a go. But the clear message is we are not a welfare state. We must make a contribution to get something back."

Body language expert and corporate speaking coach Dr Louise Mahler said whether it was the influence of his policeman dad or mentor Peter Costello, Mr Morrison still needed to undo the appearance of arrogance.

Smile PM

Ms Mahler said Mr Morrison's main challenge as a public speaker was that when answering questions, he nods his head backwards.

"This may be the imitation of an influential person in his life or just poor habitual patterning," she said. "From the perception of others however, it has one strong interpretation: it is seen as arrogance. In his new role as the leader of a nation, it is time to fix it."

Ms Mahler said Mr Morrison also needs to work on not pulling down the corners of his mouth which shows anger and harshness.

"It is not something you are born with, at 50 you get the face you deserve, he has got to learn to properly smile," she says.

Another speech expert Michael Kelly scored Mr Morrison high, at least in comparison to Mr Dutton.

"On the positive, Mr Morrison is energetic, playful, sharply dressed, has utter confidence in self, never seems to lose his cool and is a good example of getting people to believe your certainty," Mr Kelly said.

On the negative, Mr Kelly said Mr Morrison can rush his delivery under pressure and at times venture into being flippant in his delivery and manner.

Turnbull's gracious swan song

The speech experts were fawning of Mr Turnbull's final performance as PM on Friday, calling it relaxed, empathetic and gracious in a way we have not seen for years.

"This could be as a reflection of years of practice in the public eye or perhaps as a reflection of enormous relief of the weight lifted from his shoulders," Ms Mahler said.

"His breath was low. His arms were loose and we saw no more hopelessly repetitive karate chop gestures," she said.

"He put his arms around his wife, he casually played with the children and the press gallery applauded him strongly. Despite an exhausted face, with deep bags under his eyes, he had a smile, an upright posture and a soft blink with his eyes. This is the Malcolm Turnbull we have not always seen in his leadership role," Ms Mahler said.

Ms Faraday-Brash agreed. "He displays some class and probably took heart ... that his adversaries lost out. He can be pleased for Scott Morrison because Scott didn't scheme against him," she said.