

Dr Mathew Doidge

response to the July flooding which caused 177 deaths (47 in Nordrhein-Westfalen) was disastrous, at one point being forced to apologise when footage emerged of him guffawing as German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier was delivering remarks to the victims of the floods. This was quickly followed by a further apology for plagiarism in his 2009 book *The Upwardly Mobile Republic*, a problem to which the German political establishment seems particularly prone. As a consequence of these and other slip-ups, Laschet support slump to the lowest levels ever polled.

The Greens, too, have found the going tough. Having risen to the top of the heap in late April following their selection of Annalena Baerbock as Chancellor candidate, their decline has been precipitous. As with Laschet, Baerbock, who has been a member of the Bundestag since 2013, has no experience at the national executive level. And also as with Laschet, a number of missteps have taken the shine off her candidacy and raised questions as to her personal credibility and self-portrayal as a plain-spoken reformist: inaccuracies on her CV, accusations of plagiarism in her 2021 book *Now. How We Renew Our Country*, and a failure to fully declare income to the Bundestag authorities, among them.

By

previously served as Minister for Labour and Social Affairs, and since 2018 as Minister of Finance and Vice-Chancellor in the CDU/CSU-

the party infighting that resulted from serving as the junior partner in such a government for

each of the three main parties, though differences exist on how to do this. Where the CDU/CSU prefer market-based measures, and the SPD is concerned with allowing time for businesses to adjust, the Greens advocate significant government spending and protection measures to make a reality of industrial transformation. The German direction will have a significant impact beyond its border too, with an expectation that it will play a key role in defining targets for the broader European Union. Leadership at the European level will have flow-on effects in global negotiations too, with the German approach to transformation