

By-election: Ind Liberal Pete Smith has a final word..



While not quite a walkover this time, the electorate of south-west coast has again voted for a conservative party over change, in a result that has incensed a former Liberal. Image: Carnivorus.

“YOUTH AND BUSINESS LOSE IN BY ELECTION FIT FOR DROVER’S DOG”

PETE SMITH’S MEDIA RELEASE

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"]V[/dropcap>oters in the South West Coast have foregone an opportunity for change that will be manifested in the electorate’s youth and in business for at least a decade, according to failed Liberal Independent candidate Pete Smith.

“At a time when Portland in particular is looking for inspiration and leadership, people have voted for nothing more than an image on a poster and the Liberal Party’s logo,” Mr Smith said.

"With a campaign run out of Melbourne along traditional party lines and while constantly tethered to a Liberal minder, Mrs Britnell uttered not one visionary word.

"I don't blame voters, I did exactly the same thing for over 40 years."



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[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"]
M[/dropcap]r Smith said that with the electorate of no interest or benefit to the current Labor government, it was doomed to a decade of drip fed maintenance for roads and services and nothing more. "

"...and when a Liberal government returns to power, other more pressing marginal electorates will receive the lion's share of funding.

"What our young people needed was a reason to stand tall, knowing that Portland was earmarked to lead Australia – if not the world – in renewable energy research and tourism while Warrnambool would be afforded the same status in dairying promotion and excellence," he said.

"Businesses, particularly those in the services and hospitality sector should have opened their doors today (Monday) with a sense of relief and renewal, and with a spring in their step; instead it will be yet another dog day afternoon in what will become a decade of them."

Notwithstanding what he termed a tragic and deeply troubling setback for the electorate, Mr Smith said he felt a sense of responsibility to strive to achieve more for the electorate as a private citizen than Ms Britnell will as the local member.

“I intend to seek Roy Reekie’s help to broker a meeting with Labor Premier Daniel Andrews to outline a plan of action in which he can demonstrate his personal commitment and concern for the electorate.

“Having been gifted a seat that a famous drover’s dog could have won for the Liberals, Roma won’t be out to make waves or put the electorate and its people before the party politics, whereas I am and I can,” Mr Smith said.

[box]After taking an initial hit, the primary Liberal vote currently sits at 40% (down 16.6%) on the back of the thousands of pre-poll votes and postal votes now being counted. Candidate Roma Britnell will rely on the preferences of National Party candidate Michael Neoh to win. Independent Roy Reekie is sitting second with almost 17% of the primary vote, followed by Michael Neoh on 14.38%. [You can find counting updates here.](#)[/box]