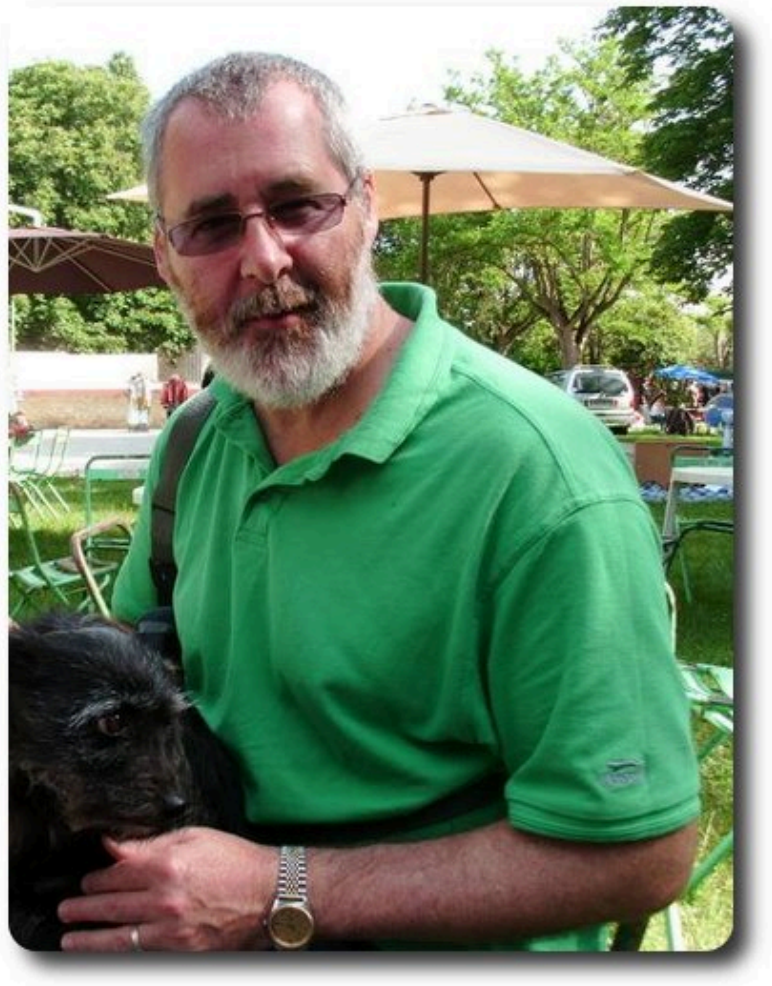
Reekie to challenge Napthine for South West Coast



Warrnambool lawyer Roy Reekie will line up against Denis Napthine for a third time at the next state election.

COMMENT

[dropcap style="color: #8f9f59;"] A [/dropcap]fter months of speculation, Warrnambool lawyer **Roy Reekie** is poised to announce his preselection as the Labor challenger to Premier **Denis Naphine** for the seat of South West Coast.

Well-placed sources said Mr Reekie's pre-selection had been recently finalised by the Labor Party and an official

announcement would be made shortly.

Ever since returning to live in Warrnambool last year, Mr Reekie has been one of the most promising prospects for Labor because of an already-established profile on the back of the 2002 state election. In that year, Mr Reekie came within a tantalising few hundred votes of pulling off the greatest upset that the south-west has ever seen.

Then, as now, his competitor was Dr Napthine, as it was again in 2006.

The election on November 29 will see the third showdown between the pair, but this time Mr Reekie faces an enormous task, despite the polls indicating that the Coalition will lose office.

While far from the safest Liberal seat in Victoria (that honor goes to leafy Malvern on a 20.5% swing) South West Coast requires an almost 12% swing for the seat to change hands and that is highly unlikely to happen.

What will happen, however, is a concerted push by Labor to carve into that bloated margin and, at the very least, drag it back into single digits so that the 2018 state election becomes a real contest.

And this can only be good for everybody, whether you vote Labor, Liberal, Greens, Nationals or for the Palmer United Party.

Marginal seats are seats where things happen and things get done.

As I wrote last August in the lead-up to the federal election, why would anybody wish to keep voting in the same party, year after year?

Such predictability makes politicians go soft in the mouth. They know they don’t have to work too hard to actually

deliver, because, heck, we just keep voting them back in anyway.

Judging by his extraordinary number of media appearances of late, there is no doubt Dr Napthine works very hard at his job, but the South West Coast is suffering.

Our major roads are terrible, our education standards are embarrassing, our tourism appeal is patchy (especially compared to what is happening at the *other* end of the Great Ocean Road), and our V-Line train service is one of the worst performing in the state.

We deserve better.

Mr Reekie, together with the Greens candidate **Thomas Campbell** and all of the other candidates yet to emerge, has his work cut out for him, but let's at least hope for a robust race.

We deserve that too.

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