

Roy Reekie's open letter to voters

By-election: Roy Reekie's open letter to voters.

Ed Mahony joins the race for WCC election

Fresh face: Ed Mahony's bid to join W'bool City Council.

Sucking the wind right out of Portland's sails

Opinion: What is the long-term future of Portland?

Time for Dan to deliver



[Image: australiavotes.org]

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color:#A5CECD;"] T
[/dropcap]he Liberal Party will be well satisfied with its thumping victory in Wannon at the weekend as part of the national swing against Labor, but now it is time for Dan Tehan to deliver.

To date, Dan has been in the luxurious position of being able to make significant promises that have yet to be tested, but the people of Wannon will now apply a very different yardstick to that which he has enjoyed as a member of the Opposition.

For the first time as the Member for Wannon, he will be expected to not only stand by his promises, but to also defend the decisions of his entire Government: decisions which, more often than not, will be well beyond his control.

This is what Dan's opponent in Labor's Michael Barling faced as a mere candidate: an expectation that he, personally, should be held accountable for decisions that were being made much higher up the political chain.

[box] Given the announcements in the lead-up to the election, Wannon will be waiting expectantly to see how long it takes for Dan to come good on his word as part of Coalition Government.[/box]

First cab off the rank is the \$10 million promised for the Peter's Project cancer treatment centre. Once the new

Government is installed, that should surely be signed off without delay.

Next will be a reduction in mobile phone blackspots across the electorate, plus the rollout of the Coalition's cheaper, copper-based broadband scheme which promises, by the end of 2016, five times the speed we have now in places like Naringal and Nullawarre and Dunkeld and Maryborough.



The potholed roads around western Victoria should be a thing of the past by the next election, and the Princes Highway between Warrnambool and Melbourne will be well in the throes of transforming itself into a true national road that is a pleasure to drive with its smooth surface, multiple overtaking lanes and dual carriageways.

The Coalition promised that the scrapping of the carbon tax would mean more funds for this sort of spending and would also reduce our cost of living.

[box] This week, make a note of your electricity bill, grocery bill and mortgage repayments, because we have been assured that they will all tumble without the carbon tax and an improved economy.[/box]

And so, to the economy. We have been told it was a basket case and modern times have rarely been so grim. Dan – and the Coalition – has promised more jobs, although I doubt they will be in renewable energy, and more opportunities for young people seeking training, a higher education or employment. The

national unemployment rate currently sits at around 5.7 per cent; please make a note of that too.

Come 2016, we can retrieve our notes and be in a position to see if the landslide was deserved.

For the sake of a now super-safe seat like Wannon, I hope that it is.

Why I'm voting for Barling



Opinion – Carol Altmann

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A5CECD;"] I [/dropcap]MAGINE living in a place where an election was held every three years and, no matter how many candidates ran, the same party kept winning? Would you call this a healthy democracy? Well, we live in a place just like that and it is called the federal seat of Wannon.

For the past ~~58~~ 61 years – that is 10 years longer than I have been alive – the Liberal Party has won Wannon.

In the past ~~58~~ 61 years, there have been **22** **23** federal elections – the ~~23rd~~ 24th will be held on Saturday – and, in

that time, just **three** different Liberals have held the seat of Wannon: Malcolm Fraser, David Hawker and Dan Tehan.

It is not surprising that the Liberal Party has come to treat Wannon as a soft landing for its next generation of MPs. Dan Tehan, who seems like a nice enough guy, was parachuted into the seat of Wannon four years ago.

He had little connection to south-west Victoria, but bought a property near Hamilton to try and fast-track his status as a local. Is that all it takes for the Liberal Party to secure this seat? Judging by the 2010 election result, it appears so.

And while the Wannon electorate has fallen into line year after year, many of these same voters can be heard complaining – yes, complaining – that they are being taken for granted.

Of course this contempt for safe seats is not confined to the Liberal Party, they all do it, but this election Wannon voters have an opportunity to draw a line in the sand and demand a real contest.

With the help of the redrawn boundaries, Wannon is now defined as a 'marginal' seat, although it still requires an almost a 6 per cent swing to change hands.

And, for the first time in a long time, the ALP has a strong local candidate in Warrnambool secondary school teacher **Michael Barling** who has had time to build his profile and who has committed an enormous amount of energy toward winning the seat. He has done this despite the antics of federal Labor making it increasingly impossible for him to win: he has not given up.



I am not normally a Labor voter, but I am going to vote for Barling because he represents to me what politics should be about.

It is about presenting voters with a real choice, not a fait accompli.

It is about supporting a candidate who knows and loves the electorate because he or she has spent most of their life here, not because they have been forced to relocate in the lead up to an election.

And it's about having a candidate with a strong moral compass who is prepared to challenge the party line on issues like asylum seekers and gay rights, rather than follow it blindly.

Above all, however, it's about electing an MP who will continually fight hard for the seat, whether in Government or in Opposition, knowing that they will be held fully accountable at each election.

This will happen if Wannon shifts even further into marginal territory after Saturday: that's the sort of democracy I want to see in action.