

Local conservatives will hold sway, betting poll shows



Member for Wannon Dan Tehan

THE ODDS

WANNON (VIC)
\$1.01 Coalition
\$50 Labor
CORANGAMITE (VIC)
\$1.25 Coalition
\$3.50 Labor
Source: Sportsbet.com.au



Member for Corangamite Darren Cheeseman

Bookies back Liberals

REGION
By SEAN McCOMISH

THE Liberal Party will keep a tight grip on the federal seat of Wannon and Labor looks like it could lose its hold on the ultra-marginal seat of Corangamite — according to the nation's bookmakers.

The unofficial political poll and marketing ploy was released by a betting agency yesterday showing \$50 odds

for the Labor Party to take the seat of Wannon with punters set for a small return on the \$1.01 odds for bets on Dan Tehan.

With Labor yet to pre-select a candidate for the blue ribbon seat, Mr Tehan is still the unbackable favourite for the electorate held by the Liberal Party since 1955.

The Wannon MP played down the figures yesterday afternoon, knocking back an

invitation to make a modest profit from his campaign.

"It's months away and as far as I'm concerned I'm just going to work as hard as I possibly can — there's no such thing as a certainty in politics," he said.

Mr Tehan said the push for a south-west cancer care centre would be an issue in the upcoming poll.

Corangamite MP Darren Cheeseman had some harder

words on the bookies' call, spruiking himself as the political underdog with \$3.50 for the sitting member compared to \$1.25 backing the Coalition.

"A bit like Black Caviar I like to run my opponents down from behind," Mr Cheeseman said.

Mr Cheeseman, who took his seat during the 2007 election, said he had taken bad odds from the bookies during

both elections so far and had proven them wrong. "A lot of disappointed Liberals lost money twice," he said.

The MP highlighted education and health funding as issues on the campaign landscape this year.

Liberal candidate Sarah Henderson conceded a close race was ahead.

"This is going to be a very tough fight and every single vote will count — like last

time, I think that Corangamite will go down to the wire," Ms Henderson said.

Both Mr Tehan and Mr Cheeseman agreed the dairy crisis would play a role in their electorates.

Mr Cheeseman said the advance of Katter's Australian Party into Corangamite would see re-regulation of the dairy industry put on the table for voters.

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Call for more funding on Great Ocean Road

REGION
By MATTHEW O'TOOLE

A CAMPAIGN calling for increased funding for the Great Ocean Road has been launched.

The campaign centres around an online petition that calls for the federal government to include the iconic road on the National Land Transport Network, which would open it up to funding of \$10 million a year for a five-year period for upgrades and maintenance.

Corangamite Shire mayor Chris O'Connor, who represented the south-west at the launch on Friday, said he believed that without improvements to the Great Ocean Road, the south-west would suffer.

"It's all about the deterioration of the Great Ocean Road from the greater south-west point of view," Cr O'Connor said.

"The 12 Apostles is the third most visited site behind Uluru and the Great Barrier Reef and has around seven million visitors per year.

"It's important to us that it's kept in a good condition as it does act as a funnel to the south-west region."

With over seven million visitors a year travelling on the road and this figure expected to double in the next 10 years, Cr O'Connor said the funding cannot be ignored any longer.



Chris O'Connor: the Great Ocean Road is the gateway to the south-west.

"We're looking at the Great Ocean Road and the 12 Apostles as a national destination and the fact is that it's deteriorating," he said.

"We think it needs an injection of funds to keep it maintained and as the iconic Australian site people expect to visit."

Pay rise for Moyne councillors

MOYNE
By SEAN McCOMISH

MOYNE Shire councillors have passed the final motion to give themselves a pay rise.

The move went through with little debate last week after no objections were received.

Councillors' allowances of \$21,859 will go up by \$546, while the present \$67,635 allowance of mayor Jim Doukas

will increase by \$1691. Moyne is classed as a category 2 council under the Local Government Act and has adopted the maximum pay limits since March 2005.

Cr Doukas also receives a mayoral car in addition to his salary.

The council gave notice of the plans after meeting in November last year

The motion was carried unanimously.

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