



# Safe seat blues

By Peri Strathearn

THE State election campaign officially began on Saturday, but Murraylands and Mallee voters could be forgiven for failing to show much interest.

The local electorates of Hammond, Schubert, MacKillop, Chaffey and Kavel are all held by Liberal MPs with comfortable margins.

None of the representatives of those electorates - Adrian Pederick (Hammond), the retiring Ivan Venning (Schubert), Mitch Williams (McKillop), Tim Whetstone (Chaffey) and Mark Goldsworthy (Kavel) - sit on the State Opposition's ministry team.

Mr Whetstone and Mr Williams are parliamentary secretaries.

So, as politicians of all shades begin 28 days of hand-shaking, cash-promising and sloganeering, why should local voters care?

Liberal leader Steven Marshall, who visited Wellington on Saturday evening for a black-tie dinner with the party faithful, said it was time for a change after 12 years of Labor government.

"Do we have four more years of Labor's economic mismanagement or a Liberal government that's going to prioritise job creation for the next generation?" he asked.

He said regional development - and Labor's disinterest in it - would be a major issue during the election campaign.

"We want to see people stay in the regions, we want regions to grow, but that requires investment in the regions," he said.

"I've made four trips to the Murraylands in the last six months and know the issues."

He declined to speculate about whether Liberal candidate for Schubert Stephan Knoll or any of the

incumbent Liberal MPs would be promoted to ministries in a Liberal government.

A spokeswoman for Premier Jay Weatherill said Labor's local campaign would focus on protecting communities from Liberal cuts.

Development Minister Gail Gago said Labor's commitment to a healthy and sustainable River Murray was one reason Murraylands and Mallee residents should vote to keep the current government in office.

"We fought for a fair plan for the river and its communities against intense resistance from the eastern states, and Mr Marshall's Opposition were silent," she

said.

"They refuse to stand up to their Federal counterparts.

"Regional South Australians deserve a stronger, positive voice representing them."

She pointed to the yield-boosting New Horizons soil project, a Murraylands and Riverland business cluster program and the Regional Development Fund - worth a total of \$7.7 million - as more examples of the Labor government's dedication to country areas.

- Details: For continuing coverage of the State election campaign, visit [www.murrayvalleystandard.com.au/news/election-2014](http://www.murrayvalleystandard.com.au/news/election-2014).

## SAFE AS HOUSES

Projected two-party preferred margins in Murraylands and Mallee electorates according to the Electoral Commission of South Australia

Hammond (Adrian Pederick) - 17.8pc

Schubert (Ivan Venning/Stephan Knoll) - 17.8pc

MacKillop (Mitch Williams) - 24.8pc

Chaffey (Tim Whetstone) - 28.1pc

Kavel (Mark Goldsworthy) - 15.8pc



**Adrian Pederick**  
Seat of Hammond



**Stephan Knoll**  
Seat of Schubert



**Mitch Williams**  
Seat of McKillop

