

# FEDERAL ELECTION 2001

## Family face test

Picture: SIMON DALLINGER



● Mr Stone, flanked by candidates Ms Panopoulos and Mrs Ley and his mother, Mrs Pam Stone.

### Stone home to help hopefuls

IT was a call to arms for Liberal Party members and their supporters when their federal president visited the Border yesterday.

Mr Shane Stone, the man who Liberal candidate for Indi, Ms Sophie Panopoulos described as the "local boy with the greatest influence in Australian politics" was home for a short visit.

Mr Stone was home to visit his mother and former Wodonga mayor, Pam Stone, and home to provide a strong helping hand to his party's candidates in Indi and Farrer.

Yesterday morning he joined Ms Panopoulos to do some door-knocking of Wodonga businesses and catch up with old friends.

But his message to party

members, even before Prime Minister Mr John Howard called the November 10 election, was that the campaign would not be a "lay down misere".

"Nothing can be taken for granted. It is up to every Liberal Party member and supporter to get John Howard re-elected," he said.

"The Opposition is very committed and very hungry for political office after six or seven years in the wilderness."

Mr Stone warned that it would take the Coalition Government considerable effort to get re-elected and the fight would be "very tough".

"Fewer people are rusted-on voters. According to research we have done in the past they were

40 per cent of Liberal voters and the same percentage of Labor voters," he said.

"There are now less than 30 per cent on both sides and up to 12 per cent of Australians made up their mind as they walked up to cast their vote."

Mr Stone saved his strongest words of praise for Ms Panopoulos and Mrs Sussan Ley.

"One of the reasons I have been putting in a lot of work here is that in Albury and Wodonga there is a really great opportunity to elect two really talented young women who are not just tokens," he said.

"They are actually accomplished young women in their own right who have the capacity to go on and do great things for Albury and Wodonga."

### Candidates set for dash to polling booths

LIFE on the hustings took on somewhat more of an urgent feel yesterday afternoon for the candidates for Farrer and Indi.

With the Prime Minister's announcement, it was time for many to look over their schedules and make firm plans for the next 35 days.

National candidate for Indi Mr Don Chambers, on his way to Melbourne for a wedding yesterday, said not even an election could alter the importance of the family occasion.

Mr Chambers said he would return to Indi today to attend the Yarrawonga show before a debate with his opponents in Moyhu tonight.

The debate in Moyhu and the Benalla Cup tomorrow is on the agenda for Labor candidate for Indi, Mrs Barb Murdoch.

One Nation candidate for Indi, Mrs Lyn Bennetts, was in Euroa when the election was called and would continue with plans to doorknock at Benalla and Wangaratta.

"The response has been very good and positive and the calendar is getting full. I'm quite busy," she said.

Labor candidate for Farrer, Mr Frank Millen was in the process of opening his Albury campaign office when the announcement was made.

The timing couldn't have been better.

"We have been readying ourselves for this fight for some time and are ready to go in 110 per cent," he said.

Mr Millen's National Party opponent, Mr Bill Bott, said he was relaxed

and ready to enjoy the campaign.

"We've been going ahead for 14 months, it's time to say 'let's get on with it'," he said.

Mr Bott said his weekend's program would see him at Culcairn show today and back in Albury for the ballet tonight, while on Sunday he would be attending a fundraising garden party for Lutheran Aged Care.

Farrer independent candidate Mr Stuart Watson said he was ready to go and would be headed for the Lockhart festival and Culcairn show today.

Mr Brett Paterson said his local branch of the Australian Democrats was also prepared to do battle in Farrer but was focusing on a low profile campaign.

"We've budgeted for three weeks and I'm looking to getting around the whole of the electorate."

His Indi counterpart, Mr Rob Chuck, said even if he had begun eight weeks ago he would not have been able to get around the large electorate.

But he is ready to debate with "anybody who pops their head up".

Mrs Sussan Ley, Liberal candidate for Farrer will be the third candidate shaking hands with Culcairn show goers after attending the Lockhart festival today.

The coming week will see her launch her campaign office at Lavington on Tuesday and visit smaller centres around Albury before moving further afield the following week.