

ScoMo bus hits the campaign trail to shore up marginal seats



The "Scom" bus hits the campaign trail in Queensland this week to shore up seats in which both parties believe the election will be decided. Picture: Twitter

Ben Packham, Political Reporter, 12:00AM November 5, 2018

Scott Morrison is hitting the road in a new Queensland "ScoMo bus" for a four-day blitz of the state's RSLs, surf clubs and retirement villages to shore up as many as 10 marginal seats.

The Prime Minister will travel from the Gold Coast to Townsville, spruiking key Coalition issues, including the state's infrastructure needs, Labor's "retiree tax" and the government's small business policy.

The tour got off to a rocky start, however, when senior Queensland Liberal Steve Ciobo refused to say yesterday whether the leadership switch to Mr Morrison would help improve the government's stocks in the state. "I don't think it serves anyone's purpose and I also don't think, frankly, that Queenslanders or indeed Australians more generally, care about what's happened," Mr Ciobo told Sky News.

The Defence Industry Minister, who voted for fellow Queensland Peter Dutton in August's leadership spill, said Australians "recognised" the prime ministership had changed hands but the issue was now "behind us".

Former Labor treasurer Wayne Swan, a veteran Queensland MP, said sightings of Mr Morrison in the state were “rarer than sightings of Migaloo the white whale.

“If you compare his visits to Queensland to (Bill) Shorten, Mr Shorten has been to Queensland dozens of times and he has held town halls the length and breadth of the state,” Mr Swan said.

“(Mr Morrison) is here for four days, which is much longer than he has been here (at any time) in the last five years.”

Mr Swan said Mr Morrison’s record in Queensland was one of “savage cuts” to health and education, a disputed claim Labor made at the Longman by-election.

The sky-blue ScoMo bus, featuring a larger-than-life picture of the Prime Minister, will make stops in Logan, in the knife-edge seat of Forde and in several Brisbane-based seats. Stops are also planned in Rockhampton, Bundaberg, Gladstone and Mackay, taking in the knife-edge seats of Capricornia, Flynn and Dawson.

Former Labor senator Sam Dastyari accused Mr Morrison of an attempt to copy the Opposition Leader’s “Bill bus”, which hit the road during the 2016 election.

The Coalition’s “Team Queensland” MPs recently met with Mr Morrison to discuss a new battle plan to hold on to a raft of marginal seats where both parties expect the election to be decided.

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