

## **Concession speech: Alfred Deakin, Prime Minister (Fusion)**

***Melbourne: April 14, 1910***

“Of course, the election returns are not complete, even for Victoria. My own fortune is still in the balance. But there are already sufficient certainties registered to spoil the record.

When capable, upright, and loyal representatives of the community are cast aside at the ballot-box, particularly when they are old and cherished comrades, the loss is hard to bear indeed.

Under such circumstances public life ceases to be worth living from any personal point of view.

A little reflection on the causes of such defeats more than justifies the warnings the night before the poll.

No sanguine anticipations of victory had been uttered by me at any period.

On the contrary, from Rockhampton to Adelaide I kept insisting that Labour successes were not merely possible, but probable.

Everything depended on the response of the electors. The totals known, though apparently better than those of 1906, are still most unsatisfactory.

But it was the lack of patriotic interest in, and of trustworthy information upon, the great issues involved that occasioned my alarm.

Everywhere one met with prepossessions and misapprehensions that no platform exposition could be expected to eradicate.

The suffrage when used was evidently likely to be widely abused.

The results to date also afford one more severe lesson to the bulk of our people of the necessity for permanent organisation.

There is much in Labour methods which we shall always condemn and avoid. But one thing is plain. Henceforward Liberals cannot rely for obtaining a full poll upon mere extemporary preparations just prior to a contest.

The education of the indifferent or ill-informed requires to be undertaken in advance, and systematically pursued.

This is especially true in relation to national interests and Commonwealth Parliamentary proceedings, upon which the haziest and most misleading views are widely circulated.

The immense area of this continent, on which settlement is so lightly sprinkled, makes political education far more difficult, but at the same time more essential, in order that the destinies of Australia may be efficiently dealt with by its self-governing electors.”

Source: Compiled from The Maryborough Chronicle, The Brisbane Courier and Sydney Morning Herald, 15/4/1910, page 7.