



## Lyons: ‘We are losing crime fight’

Independent candidate for Geelong Darryn Lyons has accused the Andrews Government of “playing politics” with crime.

“Why does it take an election for politicians, desperate for headlines, to trot out promises of more police and more resources? Surely the fight against crime is continuous, not a PR opportunity on the eve of when voters go to the polls,” he said today.

The former Mayor, who lists law and order as a top priority in his bid to take the seat from Labour, said people could take “cold comfort” from the latest crime figures for Geelong.

“Certainly, there has been a drop in the overall crime rate over the past 12 months, and our police are to be commended. But violent crimes against people continue to rise, particularly for sexual offences which have soared to the highest rate in 10 years.

“Statistics aside, many people do not feel safe and secure in their homes and on our streets. Just ask them. So, is the government winning the fight against crime? Not in my view.”

Mr Lyons pledged several initiatives if he was elected, including:

- A greater police presence in the city and suburbs, including bike patrols
- More Protective Services Officers to ease workloads on police officers
- A major review of police resources aimed at putting desk-bound officers back on the streets
- Tougher legislation against criminals, “as the community expects”
- A new app, successful in the United Kingdom, that issues alerts to people of crimes in their immediate area
- Greater lighting of city streets to eliminate bad behaviour and lawlessness.

He said the app was a technology “no brainer”. “It’s a smart and effective way for users to take steps to protect themselves and their families.

“For people without access, they should be contacted personally or letter dropped if crime clusters are occurring in their neighbourhood. It works overseas and it would work here.”

He described the “bright lights” initiative as well as more city living as self-policing measures. “It has been proven they can reduce crime. Bad people do not like beautiful places so revitalising our city centre has multiple benefits, particularly in terms of safety.”

Mr Lyons also criticised this week’s Government announcement of PSOs being deployed around the mall.

“This is yet another half-baked election promise. The council requested this years ago and met with a flat refusal. The only way to address the problem – and transform the city centre at the same time – is to bulldoze the place.

“The Government also needs to do more about CCTV in crime hot spots rather than expecting cash-strapped local government to shoulder the responsibility. When Pakington Street traders pleaded for cameras to combat record levels of crime in their shopping strip they were given funding for an education program.

“It was laughable. But crime right across Victoria is no laughing matter. It’s serious, it’s distressing families and it must stop!” he said.

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