



Sunday, October 21, 2018

‘Thugs’ menace Lyons campaign

The State election campaign of former Geelong Mayor Darryn Lyons is being sabotaged by abuse, intimidation and vandalism.

In the latest disturbing incident, tyres on his promotional van were slashed after being parked on the city foreshore overnight.

“Whoever was responsible is the lowest of the low. Absolute scumbags. They not only put the driver – me - at risk, but other road users,” said Mr Lyons, who is running as an independent for the seat of Geelong.

His campaign team have reported the attack to police.

Sharp objects were placed under all four wheels of the distinctive pink van, but Mr Lyons was unaware of the lethal spikes when he hit the campaign trail early today.

“It was the first time we did not garage the vehicle at night, simply because I wanted to get on the road early. Thank God I noticed a problem and immediately stopped driving.”

Only one tyre was destroyed, but Mr Lyons said if several had burst the large van would have been “incredibly dangerous” to other motorists.

“This is a stupid, senseless criminal act. The culprits should be made accountable.”

Mr Lyons, who is considered a real chance to unseat the sitting Labor member, said in other “acts of intimidation and thuggery” owners and staff of a number of businesses displaying his election posters had been verbally abused and intimidated.

More than a dozen promotional signs have been slashed and vandalised in the city and Geelong West.

“There is no need for this sort of appalling behaviour. It’s undemocratic. We should be having a good, fair contest, not abusing and intimidating people who wish to support a particular candidate.

“Let the voters decide, free of any pressure, who they want to represent them in the Victorian Parliament. This whole business saddens me and I hope my opponents in this election are not subjected to the same disgraceful conduct.”

Mr Lyons said one Geelong West business owner reported a number of customers had publicly abused him for displaying Vote 1 Lyons posters.

“The owner said he felt intimidated by one angry individual and decided the best course of action for his family and his employees was to remove the posters.

“Another sent a text stating: ‘Unfortunately we had to take your poster down as some customers and some people walking by decided to start cursing our staff and openly throwing their opinions in our faces and causing too much of a scene in front of other customers. It was just a bit too much of a scene in front of other customers. You still have support from the majority of us.’”

Mr Lyons said while he had details of the incidents, he did not wish to release them publicly to avoid further repercussions.

“The victims have endured enough; they just want to get on with their lives and running their businesses. But they have certainly seen the worst side of human nature.”

Mr Lyons, well known for his passion of all things Geelong, went on social media to condemn those responsible. An avalanche of feedback urged him to push ahead with his campaign.

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