

To the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters

I was a volunteer handing out How to Vote Liberal material at the above booth on the Victorian election.

I would like the Committee to canvass a number of issues for me with the Electoral Commissioner:

As volunteers for the Liberal Party we are reminded to be polite and merely offer our material to the voting public. Not to engage in discussions/arguments, harangue nor harass voters. So how was it that on the day, that members of both the Nurses Union and the Ambulance Union were on the grounds of the Primary School doing just that? They were in fact electioneering. I also had my daughter-in-law helping and she felt intimidated by the aggressiveness of these people.

Also as a Party we are not allowed to display advertising material within the grounds of the Primary School, the fence being the boundary after which no signs were permitted. So how was it that the Firefighters Union not only had staff in fire-fighting gear within the grounds, but actually drove and parked a fire brigade within the grounds of the Primary School? It's not a sign but it's a pretty solid representation of an advertising vehicle, isn't it?

I would also like to have addressed, the fact that the Member for Bentleigh was systematically harassed and subjected to intimidation from union stand-over merchants and thugs during the Election campaign. I know for a fact that she stopped using her Electoral vehicle at night, which she left outside her office and then went nearby where she had the use of an unmarked vehicle, because late at night she was being followed home from electoral activities by men. We all know of course, that if the Member for Bentleigh had been a "Brick with eyes" or married to a 6 foot footballer, there is no way that men would be standing on her nature strip in the early hours of the morning. I have to say that I never thought I would live to see this sort of attempted intimidation at a local election and I want to know whether there was an official complaint made to the Electoral Commissioner on this type of behaviour or to the Police and what action has been taken.

What are the penalties for trying to intimidate a sitting Member of Parliament? If there isn't a significant penalty for an organisation proven to have orchestrated this type of activity, why isn't there? And if individual people were proved to have done it off their own bat, is there a substantial penalty for each and every one of them? Maybe if there was a very big sum of money involved these stand-over merchants would think twice about it.

*By way of information only:* My husband is a Member of the Liberal Party, I am not and have never been a Member of any political party.

Therese Coles