

Thank you to the committee for the opportunity to put forward this submission on the conduct of the 2025 election.

This submission is in three sections. The first is general thoughts about some of the issues that I identified over the course of the election. The second section is a summary of a survey that was filled out by a number of volunteers documenting the abuse directed at Jewish volunteers in some campaigns. The third section are a few personal thoughts on the issues arising from the campaign with regards to the Jewish community.

General recommendations

1. Increase number of federal divisions

- ☐ The size of the electoral divisions is too big
 - There are over 120,000 voters per electoral division
 - Internationally this ratio is one of the highest among comparable democracies
 - In the two expansions of the size of the House of Representatives in 1949 and 1984 the number of voters per MP were maintained at under 70,000
 - The current ratio impacts the ability of a single MP to successfully represent all the people in the division
- ☐ There is currently a malapportionment in both Northern Territory and Tasmania
 - NT has only enough for 1 seat, but it granted 2 seats by legislation
 - Tasmania should only be eligible for 3-4 seats but have 5 as per the constitution
 - Because of this, votes in NT and Tasmania have more power than in the rest of the country
 - The number of seats should be expanded to correct this problem
- ☐ To correct these issues the House of Representatives should be expanded to at least 300 MPs
- ☐ The bare minimum for the expansion should be 240. This would correct the malapportionment while still leaving the ratio above historical levels

2. Preferencing

- ☐ Additional saving provisions should be included for House ballots
 - I am generally opposed to optional preferencing, and this suggestion should be considered as a saving measure
 - The number of candidates running for parliament has an increasing trendline and can be expected to continue to rise in coming elections
 - An extreme situation came about in the recent Canadian general election where over 90 people ran in one seat, and at a recent by-election there were almost 200 candidates. If that were to be repeated in Australia with mandatory preferential voting the informal vote would be intolerably high
 - Even if we do not reach the extremes of the Canadian example, it is conceivable that there may be a seat with 20-25 candidates

- ☐ A saving provision should be introduced to limit the number of informal votes. Even if the saving provision kicks in after 5 legitimate preferences rather than at 1, it will allow for more people's votes to be counted as formal
3. Early voting centres (1)
- ☐ Increasing the number of early voting booths
 - The rate of early voting is increasing with each election
 - While anecdotally the wait time for most voters was not too bad (about 20 minutes), there were some who reported longer wait times of over half an hour
 - ☐ In order that this not get out of hand there should be more booths open for early voting, focusing on areas in the division that is not currently being serviced
 - A possible solution is to maintain the current number of booths for the first week of early voting where there were fewer voters, while increasing the number of booths for the busier second week
4. Early voting centres (2)
- ☐ Limiting the early voting centres that a voter can cast an in-division vote
 - There are numerous early voting booths from outside the division where voters can cast ordinary votes
 - For example, in Goldstein the AEC website listed 6 locations:
 - Hampton (18,951 votes across the 2 weeks of early voting)
 - Brighton (15,306) both these were inside the Goldstein boundaries
 - Moorabbin (6,730) a few hundred metres from Goldstein's eastern boundary
 - Oakleigh (916)
 - Malvern (743)
 - Melbourne (127)
 - These numbers are across two weeks, and so in the smaller locations there were fewer than 100 voters per day
 - This is to the advantage of campaigns that have candidates in every division, since they already have volunteers at every booth around the country
 - For smaller campaigns that compete in only one division, deploying campaign resources for such a small number of voters is not practical
 - While the smaller campaigns are free to deploy volunteers to these booths, in a practical sense it places a barrier for these candidates to fully interact with the voters attending these booths
 - The current situation is placing restrictions on the free flow of political communication from the candidates to the voters
 - Our aim should be to create a situation that will maximise the flow of political communication between candidates and voters
 - ☐ The AEC should consider increasing the number of locations where an early vote can be cast, but restricting ordinary votes to booths that are inside the division boundaries or close by
 - The definition of close by should be tightened to include only booths inside neighbouring divisions or within 1km of the electorate boundaries

- In the example of Goldstein, voters would be able to cast ordinary votes in either Hampton, Brighton or Moorabbin
- Alternatively if an additional booth were opened in the Bentleigh area it would service the voters that are currently traveling to Moorabbin, and Moorabbin can be removed as a possibility for Goldstein voters

5. Postal voting

- Creating pathways for candidates to interact with postal voters
 - Being able to interact with voters at the polling booth is an important part of the political communications at election time
 - Research show that access to the voters can influences the results and therefore is important to the right to political communication around election time
 - For obvious reasons campaigns do not have the ability to have this interaction with postal voters
 - General postal voters can be identified from the electoral roll, but those who request for a postal ballot but are not general postal voters are not known to the candidates
- Each candidate or party should have the ability to insert a single DL flyer with the voting pack sent out by the AEC with the postal ballot
 - This should be restricted to one per party to not overwhelm the voters, so a party would have the right to send one flyer that covers both the house and the senate
 - An alternative is for the party to be able to send a larger flyer that can be folded in half to cover the house and senate candidates
- The candidates should receive the addresses of all voters who request a postal ballot updated at the end of every day in the voting period to enhance the candidate's ability to interact with the voters

6. Fixed terms

- Non-fixed terms damage the democratic structures
 - Non-fixed term parliaments gives a significant advantage to the incumbent governing party
 - The candidates of the governing party can budget with certainty for a known date and plan their resources accordingly
 - Non-government candidates have to work on guesswork and projections
 - This campaign several candidates planned for a March election and had to juggle resources within the campaign when the election was called for May
 - While the main contact with voters occurs in the last weeks of campaigning, a candidate in a competitive division needs to start campaigning at least months out from the election. Not knowing the date of the election will limit the ability of non-government candidates to communicate with voters to their fullest extent
 - Now with campaign funding caps being introduced, some campaigns will be faced with the dilemma of spending their funds early in anticipation of an

early election. If the election is called later the candidate's message will be restricted in the final weeks of the campaign due to their campaign having come close to their cap early in the campaign

- This is a restriction on the candidate's free expression of their political ideas and their ability to communicate with voters to their maximum ability. A fixed term will go part of the way to solving this issue
- The ideal timing for the fixed date should be in the first half of May due to the fixed nature of the beginning of the senate term. This way there will be a minimal amount of time between the election and the sitting of the senate on July 1

7. Independent candidates

- Level the playing field for all candidates
 - Currently the electoral process favours candidates that are part of a political party
 - There are advantageous electoral donation laws including tax incentives to donate to parties
 - Independent candidates can only access these advantages after the declaration of candidates
 - Parties have access to the electoral roll, while independent candidates do not
 - The time that independents get access to these advantages is often too late in the cycle, and they are considerably behind the major parties
- The playing field must be levelled so that all candidates are at least playing with the same rules. It is clearly unfair for candidates to have an electoral advantage simply because they are members of a party
 - I understand the unwillingness to hand out the electoral rolls to anyone who claims they will run at the federal election. Some possible solutions to this problem
 - Requiring a significant number of voters from within the electorate in question to endorse the candidate. With the threshold of 1500 for a national party, 150-200 from within the electorate should be sufficient
 - The candidate that achieves these endorsements should also be able to have a logo on the ballot paper
 - Another option is to attach a significant deposit that is not prohibitive for smaller campaigns (for example \$10,000) to the candidate that is refundable at the declaration of candidates. When the deposit is paid they can access the rolls

8. Recounts

- The current AEC recount protocols are not fit for purpose
 - The current recommendation for recounts is 100 votes
 - With the AEC practice of putting votes in bundles of 50 this means that a single error can account for the entirety of this leeway. In theory this could lead to the wrong candidate being elected on only 2 errors out of 120,000 ballots (1 bundle of 50 plus 1 vote)

- An audit of random booths across the country should be conducted under recount conditions to determine the error that could reasonably be expected to occur in a count
- Very few elections end up at less than 0.1%. Increasing it to that would only lead to 1-2 recounts during most election cycles, and would not be an overly large burden on the AEC
- A larger number than 100 should be used to trigger a recount
- Preferably the recount should be a proportion of the vote (say 0.1%) rather than a fixed number of votes as it is currently

9. Speaker

- There should be a change electorally to select the role of speaker
 - Currently the speaker of the house is a partisan position and in a best case scenario they are members of a party but not sitting in the party room
 - The speaker's constituents lose out as the speaker is not able to participate in debates and cannot fully advocate for their constituents or vote on the floor of parliament
 - The UK has partially solved the problem by ensuring that the speaker resigns from all party positions and become genuinely independent, but their local constituents still lack proper representation
- The parliament should create a single malapportioned seat with its boundaries around the residence of the governor-general
 - The parliament can preselect someone on $\frac{3}{4}$ vote of all MPs, or preselected by the High Court
 - With effectively only 1 voter in the division the result is certain, and the winning candidate can take their place as a truly independent speaker
 - The role of speaker can either be term limited with parliament selecting a new candidate every cycle, or they can continue until they decide to retire as happens in UK

10. Consequences for bad faith actors

- More steps should be taken to stamp out bullying and bad faith actors
 - Bad faith actors currently have little incentive to stop their actions
 - People know they are unlikely to be charged or convicted because of a high bar required to convict
 - The potential upside for bad faith actors is winning a seat in parliament. With such a large prize at the end the cost-benefit equation to bend the rules are huge
 - Fines are not a significant deterrent, especially when winning will often bring access to donors who can cover the fines
 - Much of the poor behaviour is done at arm's length from the candidate, so even if we can determine something about an individual rule-breaker, bringing it back to the candidate under the current rules is not possible

- Many third party actors are fronts for political parties, allowing them to behave in a particular way that would otherwise harm the candidate's campaign
- Informal arrangements could be made between the candidate and other entities to greatly help a candidate's chances at the election with zero risk
- Even when there is clear wrongdoing, an AEC investigation will often not come to a conclusion until after the election, and the guilty party is already in parliament
- Some suggested amendments to the current legislation
 - The AEC should endeavour to conclude any investigations within 24-48 hours so that bad actors will see a direct consequence to their actions during the campaign period
 - The AEC should also print signs to be placed at the booths advising voters of the adverse finding against a particular candidate
 - The AEC should have the power to fine candidates by reducing their vote tallies even retrospectively, the danger of having the election stripped from the candidate is far more significant than a monetary fine
 - Some way of declaring the connection between a candidate and associated third party groups need to be made, with declarations made on campaign material put out by the third party groups
 - This should include (but not be limited to) using the same premises, same staff
 - All third party entities that wish to actively campaign should be required to publish their donors, so that links can be made with political parties
 - In order to assist with this, all political parties and independent candidates should be required to fill out real time donation updates, with real time public disclosures by the AEC
 - Candidate should be liable, at least in part, for the bad faith actions of their third-party supporters
- Social media
 - Much of the misinformation and nastiness came from social media
 - People are able to spread lies so easily that it is all but impossible for voters to have the truth of the race that they are voting on
 - Some of this bad information has to be combatted
 - We must be wary about government or AEC micromanaging information flows
 - This is the way we get government censorship and begin the process of moving towards a dictatorship
 - The community notices that are attached to posts do not seem to achieve much

- Legislation should be passed that would attach a red cross, similar to the blue ticks for accounts that peddle regular misinformation or engage in bullying behaviour
 - Social media sites will complain that they cannot do this, but anywhere in the world that they have been forced to comply with new rules they always seem to manage to achieve it

Survey for Jewish volunteers

Following the 2025 election campaign and the disgraceful conduct by campaigns opposing [REDACTED], I released a questionnaire in order to preserve some of the experiences of campaign volunteers.

The catchment for this survey was any volunteers for [REDACTED] [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] in the seats of Goldstein, Macnamara or Kooyong.

At the time of writing there were a few dozen responses, and because of my connection to the [REDACTED] campaign in Goldstein that was source of a majority of responses, although there were a few responses across the remaining campaigns. Most of the responses were from either Jews or non-Jews with a Jewish spouse.

The survey was a mix of quantitative and qualitative questions with the first questions allowing for volunteers to put in their reflections and recollections, while the last 4 questions asked to rank their answer on a scale of 1-10.

The questions posed were the following:

1. What are your reflections on the [REDACTED] Party's attitude and conduct around antisemitism regarding its impact on Jewish volunteers?
2. Are there any specific incidents of bullying or aggression related to the issue of antisemitism and/or Israel that you recall during the campaign?

Please include the following information for each incident:

- ☐ Did this happen to you or someone else?
 - ☐ Time and place (including polling booth name) of each incident?
 - ☐ Were there any instances of online incidents?
 - ☐ Who was involved in the incident, [REDACTED] a third party group (such as Advance, Better Australia, Repeal the Teals etc), another political party or member of the public with no obvious political affiliation?
 - ☐ Did a political candidate witness the incident, and if so what was their reaction?
3. Were you involved in the 2022 campaign?
How did this campaign compare to the last one with regards to the issue of antisemitism and/or Israel?

4. Did you ever refrain from any of these actions because of the fear of the reaction you may receive?
 - ☐ Placing a sign on my house
 - ☐ Wearing a t-shirt or another identifying item
 - ☐ Putting a bumper sticker on my car
 - ☐ Volunteering in particular areas
5. How threatened did you feel because of the actions of people purporting to act on behalf of - or in defence of - the Jewish community towards you?
6. How did the actions of people purporting to act on behalf of - or in defence of - the Jewish community impact your mental health?
7. [For Jews only] Do you feel that you have been harmed by the actions of the Jewish community's leadership during this campaign?
8. [For Jews only] Do you feel that your connection to the community has changed because of your experiences on the campaign?

I have grouped the responses into different categories rather than following the survey, as respondents put similarly themed comments into the responses for different questions.

General

- ☐ While there was significant bad behaviour during the campaign, it was not universal across all [REDACTED] volunteers
 - “ Whilst this is not an example of bullying or aggression, I would like to note that despite the incidents described above, which affected my mental health, there were plenty of [REDACTED] volunteers] who were extremely polite and friendly to volunteers for the [REDACTED] campaign. This unfortunately does not diminish the bullying or aggression, but I was heartened by the fact that the majority of people are polite and kind despite having different political views.
 - “ This was not universal. A [REDACTED] volunteer that I know and respect who was stationed far from the main concentration of volunteers at the beginning of the queue was shocked to hear the stories I was bringing from further down the line. He agreed that this was unacceptable
- ☐ There was also a level of understanding about the forces at work inside the Jewish community that was allowing them to be drawn into the [REDACTED] party's efforts. There was an acknowledgement of the danger of being perceived as a 'one party community'.
 - “ To be very clear - I believe the experiences outlined below were caused by this influence and I do not blame the individual people involved.
 - “ I often felt as if people (in the Jewish community) were genuinely afraid, or very angry.

- “ It is also dangerous for any specific community to allow themselves to be attached exclusively to one political party, as it compromises their ability to work with others when necessary.
- This attitude from the [REDACTED] required significant efforts to counter by the [REDACTED] campaign specifically
- “ I heard several stories from other [REDACTED] volunteers about these issues and when I did volunteer induction training I specifically trained people how to manage these situations.

Jews were a key target

- Often it was Jews who would receive the brunt of the abuse from other Jews for their support of a non-[REDACTED] candidate.
- “ On many other occasions once I declared myself to be a Jew supporting [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I was told I should be ashamed of myself. That probably happened more than 10 times and always from Jewish supporters of Tim Wilson I squarely attribute the blame for this on [REDACTED] himself.
- “ After the election, I engaged in an online exchange with [REDACTED] supporters who were jubilant about [REDACTED]'s win. I have no doubt it was from a Jew (no name, no photo, and a blocked profile) because of the words used. I was called “a kapo of the antisemite” (referring to [REDACTED]).
- Often identifying oneself as Jewish caused the reaction to become even more intense
- “ I naively thought if I said I was Jewish there would be an opportunity for dialogue however there wasn't. I was told shame on you! I was laughed at, jeered at, yelled at once.
- “ The volunteers did not identify themselves as Jewish, nor were they wearing anything to indicate their Jewish identity. It was only when the Repeal the Teals representatives overheard one of the volunteers use the distinctly Jewish name of her daughter (also volunteering) that they honed in on these individuals to call out their apparent betrayal.
- “ Many voters would noticeably turn their backs on Jewish [REDACTED] voters
- This reaction was often instigated by the [REDACTED] Jewish volunteers directed at other Jews
- “ Mostly this abuse was from identifiably Jewish voters as [REDACTED] volunteers looked on.
- A key piece of this reaction was the expectation that the [REDACTED] would get 100% of the 'loyal' Jewish vote.
- “ Pre-poll at Brighton. Female [REDACTED] volunteer in blue t-shirt at the front of the entrance to the polling place, ostentatiously fingering her Magen David pendant, and asking voters “Are you Jewish? You must put [REDACTED] last.”
- “ One interaction at a supermarket, some of [REDACTED]'s people told me 'you must be voting for [REDACTED] he is the only one looking out for us'

- More worryingly, this attitude was coming directly from respected leaders in the community
 - “ A particular local Rabbi advised members of the Jewish community to not vote for [REDACTED] because she is an antisemite.

Campaigning

- A strongly held view among many of the Jewish volunteers was that the issue of antisemitism was being weaponised for political advantage by the [REDACTED] party. It was viewed as a key part of their campaign strategy.
 - “ I believe that the [REDACTED] Party sought to present themselves to members of the Jewish community as the only party "on their side". They sought to attack other parties/candidates as being antisemitic and in opposition to Israel and it's right to exist.
 - “ The [REDACTED] party used the fear and angst of some in the local Jewish community following October 7 attacks in Israel. [REDACTED] candidate [REDACTED] proclaiming he was a Zionist and weaponised any alternative views as being anti-semitic,
 - “ I feel that they used the idea of antisemitism to further their campaign. They spread misinformation concerning other candidates' views.
 - “ I believe it was their intention to create a binary narrative whereby members of the Jewish community were made to feel that they were existentially under threat in Australia and that their only hope was to vote [REDACTED]
 - “ In my experience the [REDACTED] Party, and in particular the [REDACTED] candidate for Goldstein, cynically weaponised antisemitism without any real intent to minimise its harm.
 - “ I cannot speak for my fellow Jewish [REDACTED] volunteers but I understand that many were horrified by this behaviour and were subject to abuse. I personally feel that this tactic by the [REDACTED] party undermined the reality of anti-Semitism.
- Of particular concern was door knocking or other campaign activities where the volunteer would be relatively isolated from others
 - “ I helped with letter boxing in South Caulfield a few times. I would only do it late at night to avoid confrontations
 - “ Many volunteer doorknockers were accused of being antisemitic directly in Caulfield or occasionally elsewhere.
 - “ I was a door knocker for three months and knocked on more than 2500 doors. I was attacked verbally on many occasions.
 - “ On the day of the election, as a volunteer at the East Brighton booth, I was on my own for a short time. A [REDACTED] volunteer was shouting out that [REDACTED] was anti semetic, I quietly said she is not, then he turned on me and accused me of being racist, I smiled, then he glaredst me and shouted " You HATE Jews", !!!!!

- There were many other campaign related activities where the impression of bad faith was felt by those campaigning. Many felt that the open campaigning from the organised Jewish community for the [REDACTED] party crossed a line.
 - “ As a member of the team responsible for cleaning off the graffiti or replacing the [defaced] signs. It was a daily activity of several hours as the election drew close... to remove offensive stuff. I must have cleaned/repaid/replaced over 50 signs.
 - “ [Regarding a small business owner] He is Jewish and had a [REDACTED] poster in his window. He told me that many [REDACTED] supporters have come into his shop & told him that if he didn't take it down they would destroy/close down his business! He took it down.
 - “ They used the Jewish community as campaign props, especially Caulfield Shule that showed themselves to be nakedly partisan, ignoring the traditional separation of church and state.
 - “ This collusion included convening [REDACTED] Party events at Jewish venues (Beth Weizman community centre).
- And yet the feeling was that after all this aggression and bad faith acting there was no real plan to solve the problems raised. It was rather just a tool to win a seat.
 - “ There were no clear words about HOW and what they would actually do to counter antisemitism. Many empty statements were made.
 - “ I believe these efforts were ultimately counterproductive and harmful with respect to the safety and wellbeing of Jewish members of the community
- A big part of the discussion was the third party groups (especially Repeal the Teals) that were helping to drive the negative campaigning.
 - “ The [REDACTED], [REDACTED] & their proxies (Advance Australia/Repeal the Teals/Better Australia/[REDACTED]/AJA/Australians for Prosperity) created a false narrative including the Exclusive Brethren used as mercenaries to whip up a fervour of fear & loathing
 - “ Advance and Better Australia were harassing people outside Caulfield Junior College. Some of them were under 18.
- Often these groups would not even pretend to be a separate entity to the [REDACTED] party. They would effectively be campaigning with the [REDACTED] at the booths.
 - “ RtT workers were also seen to reappear for shifts as [REDACTED] Party workers.
 - “ We could see the strategising where the [REDACTED] were (mostly) calming their volunteers while allowing the 3rd party groups to unleash on [REDACTED]'s volunteers. Often these were the same people swapping t-shirts.
 - “ They were sharing staff and volunteers (I witnessed supporters swapping blue [REDACTED] Party t-shirts for 'Repeal the Teal' t-shirts at pre-poll, and jointly managing and storing other resources). In this way the [REDACTED] Party itself generally steered clear of the issue, while implicitly endorsing the work of informally affiliated third-party organizations.

Verbal attacks

- ☐ Many of the attacks were verbal or in writing, and while they may not have all risen to the level of bullying, the volume and consistency of the message was highly distressing for many of the volunteers
 - “ Whenever I would arrive at polling stations the [REDACTED] and Repeal the Teals people would start muttering and saying things like I was supporting an anti-Semite
 - “ When picking up the kids from school after finishing a shift at a polling booth, a grandmother began berating me for daring to turn up with a [REDACTED] t-shirt.
 - “ People [REDACTED] party t-shirts told me that [REDACTED] Daniel was antisemitic and she had brainwashed her volunteers to think otherwise.
- ☐ There seemed to be a ‘right to rule’ attitude among many of the volunteers, that their word was the incontrovertible truth. If they decided that someone was an antisemite or had troubling views, there was no recourse and they would have to bear the brunt of the abuse.
 - “ The extent of their faith in the [REDACTED], due to their words on antisemitism and Israel, was such that the behaviours of Jewish [REDACTED] volunteers (and other supporters) were divisive, disrespectful, and generally unacceptable. They were intolerant of other candidates to the point of expressing vile comments online about them, calling them antisemites if not Jewish or self-hating Jews or traitors if they were Jewish.
 - “ While I know many Jews who disagreed with this line and affiliation, their views were swamped (and mocked) by the ‘mainstream’ voices in the community, including most of the Jewish community organizations.
 - “ They aggressively used the accusation of antisemitism to silence, intimidate and harass volunteers from parties opposing the [REDACTED] party
- ☐ Many Jews were using language that would have been considered taboo recently, such as calling other Jews Hilter, kapos or self-hating Jews.
 - “ Mostly verbal abuse - called Hitler (Elsternwick station) anti-semitic (Glenhuntly) and a Jewish [REDACTED] volunteer trying to get me into a public argument presumably to film (Ormond)
 - “ At prepoll for Prahran, a second generation Holocaust survivor in her 60s was called antisemitic, she was very distressed and left in tears.
 - “ At prepoll for Macnamara I was called antisemitic routinely by Advance volunteers who were Jewish, and voters who were Jewish. It was humiliating and offensive.
 - “ If you deigned to support [REDACTED] you were a traitor or a Jew-hater.
- ☐ This abuse was present all across social media and even appearing in people’s letter boxes

- “ I received an anonymous letter, purporting to be from Climate 200, at my home address, extolling the virtues of Hitler, saying that [REDACTED] would be in touch, and signed “Your Aryan Customer Service” or similar.
- “ I also received a few typed letters in my letterbox with unsettling content – possibly due to the prominent signage on my house.
- “ In a text exchange with a Jewish acquaintance, he said he "despises" [REDACTED].
- “ Online unpleasantness on Jewish facebook and what's App groups with sweeping statements about [REDACTED]'s perceived antisemitism. I witnessed rudeness towards [REDACTED] herself.

Bullying and intimidation

- ☐ Beyond the verbal intimidation, often this would spill over into bullying and intimidation. This was an all too common outcome during the campaign.
 - “ I stood in front of a [REDACTED] HTV volunteer who was aggressively being harassed and intimidated by a voter for supporting [REDACTED] who she accused of being antisemitic. I did this to protect the volunteer from such verbal abuse, coping it myself instead.
 - “ While doorknocking in Caulfield in mid-2024 a Jewish man called me murderer and yelled at me to get off the property.
 - “ One particularly charming man shouted that my grandfather would have been ashamed of me.
- ☐ At times these standover tactics rose to the level of potential criminal activity.
 - “ They behaved in an aggressive manner towards [REDACTED]'s volunteers including videoing them and calling them antisemitic. One [Repeal the Teals] worker followed me to my car and videoed it and my number plate.
- ☐ The reaction often spilled over to open threats beyond general intimidation.
 - “ One instance occurred when I knocked on a door and a man in a [REDACTED] shirt answered. I said to him that even though we are on opposing sides, we can still be friendly and offered my hand out for a handshake. Which he refused and said in an extremely loud voice “Tell [REDACTED] to [REDACTED]”. Then he said that If I didn't get off the property immediately, he would call the police.
 - “ Aggressive bullying and extreme intimidation. [The [REDACTED] were] willing to cynically use the fears of the Jewish community for their own political ends They had no interest in fixing anything, only to enflame to try and capture as many votes as possible
- ☐ Of the various forms of intimidation the most troubling was that bullying was happening at schools directed at students who supported non-[REDACTED] candidates. With efforts over the years to stamp out bullying in schools it is a shame that it is again given legitimacy on the back of the [REDACTED] campaign.

- “ A grade 6 girl in school uniform came up to me asking Is [REDACTED] antisemitic? (looking at the ground, not making eye contact and very sheepish)... The conversation continued with me explaining [REDACTED] is not antisemitic. She started to make eye contact... After about 10 minutes her mum came over after she had voted. I learnt a lot more about them. The girl was being bullied at school.
- “ This is the only instance of this recorded in the survey, but I know of at least two other instances of schoolyard bullying over support for the [REDACTED] campaign

Physical abuse

- ☐ Unfortunately things did not end with the intimidation, but also spilled over into the physical
 - “ I was also screamed and spat at being called an antisemite when I once wore my [REDACTED] T-shirt in Princes Park. I never wore my [REDACTED] again in the park where I walk nearly everyday.
 - “ Sometimes the rage was so palpable I wondered if I would need protection if we won, and if my children would be safe.
 - “ I was door knocking 2 weeks before pre-poll started. I was on my own. The male person who answered the door saw my teal tshirt & said oh you're one of those [REDACTED] ... She hates Jews. Get off my property! I was moving back fast to do exactly that when he screamed at the top of his lungs escalating to a crescendo “Get off my property NOW!”
- ☐ While these instances of abuse were bad, they did not put the volunteers in danger of injury. However that sort of violence did happen, and was not limited to these examples. There were multiple stories similar to these ones that many have heard from various volunteers.
 - “ Cyling with my [REDACTED] t-shirt on, a car tried to push me off the road in Caulfield and screamed abuse calling me a terrorist.
 - “ A young male volunteer was pushed down a staircase by a man accusing him of being antisemitic. We reported this incident to police. He did not volunteer again.

Polling booths

- ☐ Things reached a crescendo where both campaigns interacted with large crowds. One such example was at the In One Voice concert.
 - “ I was screamed at by voters (including Jewish voters) at Brighton pre-poll, also at The Voice Festival in Elsternwick & accused of being an anti-Semite, Jew hater, child murderer & terrorist. At the Voice Festival the abusers were with [REDACTED] & either in his Tshirts or in [REDACTED] tshirts.

- “ In One Voice. I was wearing a [REDACTED] t-shirt. Two people in a [REDACTED] t-shirt interrupted my conversation saying aggressively "What about UNWRA".
- ☐ The key location for the various campaigns to interact in the same space was the polling booth.
- “ I was informed of an incident at Malvern Prepoll whereby a Repeal the Teals representative verbally abused Jewish volunteers for supporting [REDACTED]
- “ I just remember handing out materials at Caulfield South polling booth and I saw someone I know, someone Jewish, looking at me with such hatred because I was wearing a [REDACTED] t-shirt.
- “ I also witnessed some of the Repeal the Teal volunteers asking voters if they were Jewish to target them with their message of hate for [REDACTED] and the [REDACTED] even on occasions accusing [REDACTED] of being antisemitic.
- ☐ The activity at the polling booth was aggressive and the [REDACTED] were happy to encourage bad faith activity by various third party groups or voters, or at the very least allow it to happen without interfering.
- “ [REDACTED] volunteers never cared about the way we were treated while standing right next to them, then chatting and laughing with the people who abused us.
- “ At Malvern Prepoll, but also other polling places, I witnessed representatives of the "Repeal the Teals" group aggressively approach voters and try to convince them not to vote for [REDACTED]. In one case a voter tripped over because the individual came so close to her and she was trying to get away
- “ The various third-party actors were in some cases worse than the [REDACTED] Party in this regard. their overt intent was to smear the [REDACTED] candidate for political gain and not to reduce antisemitism or influence public opinion towards reasoned debate on the issue.

Brighton shule

- ☐ There was particular focus in many of the Goldstein submissions of the community event in the Brighton Synagogue.
- “ Jewish forum at Brighton shule Was a disgrace. Unfortunately made me not want to be Jewish.
- “ An old friend, who's Jewish came. He was curious and lives in Malvern and walked out of the forum in disgust.
- “ Some of my Jewish friends (both daughters of holocaust survivors) went to [event] & were shocked, embarrassed & upset at the bullying, disrespect & false accusations that [REDACTED] experienced there. One of them even reported back to me that she felt she felt antisemitic after witnessing such appalling behaviour!
- “ I was appalled. Outside we were called Nazis and anti-jews from drivers and passer bys. I felt ashamed to be Jewish! And I want to cry!

- ☐ The first concern was the bias that existed by the moderators and organisers of the event.
 - “ The moderators were heavily biased and very pro [REDACTED]
 - “ I witnessed the attempts at shaming [REDACTED] that took place. The moderators failed to maintain balance
 - “ I did experience the appalling lack of integrity from the organisers of the forum at the Brighton Synagogue and the frightening actions outside by the group who were allowed to disrupt the meeting with impunity as opposed to the stated requirement for civilised discussion.
- ☐ The other issue was the actions of the crowd that were present who were disruptive and aggressive towards [REDACTED]. This was in spite of a request that the debate be civil.
 - “ A very vocal group within the audience was loudly mocking of [REDACTED] several times while she was speaking.
 - “ I was disgusted with the way that some Jews booed welcome to country. there are many Jews in Goldstein who feel that they can behave abominably towards us and anyone else that are perceived by them to be antisemitic
 - “ In addition I attended the forum at Brighton Shule in my [REDACTED] tshirt. There was a very vocal campaign against [REDACTED] outside on arrival. Inside the [REDACTED] supporters were rude, showed no respect or interest in what [REDACTED] said or listened to her explanations when questioned about her support to Israel or the Jewish community.
 - “ This happened to me at the Jewish Forum where [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were to appear in debate. I took some empty seats near the front with my husband and was... snarled at with hatred, "we don't want [REDACTED] [REDACTED] supporters sitting with us.
- ☐ While the [REDACTED] party is not expected to take responsibility for the actions of individuals in the community, the picture built up from the rest of this survey is that they have cultivated this response from volunteers and supporters.

Comparison with 2022

- ☐ This was not an ordinary campaign in these respects. Many of the volunteers were also on the 2022 campaign, already accepted as a dirty campaign. This campaign was viewed by the volunteers as being considerably worse.
 - “ Yes I was a volunteer for [REDACTED] in 2022. That campaign was far less toxic. Mostly the [REDACTED] party volunteers were civil and there were none of the current third party groups.
 - “ 2022 had some nastiness, but nothing like this time. This election was like a Twitter comments thread come to life. People were emboldened to say the worst things
 - “ It was a very different experience this time - this campaign, people were far more openly aggressive. It is making me think twice about volunteering next time.

- “ Yes. I experienced no issues during the previous campaign . At the 2025 campaign the most aggressive experiences were at forums and to a lesser extent flyering. I did very little door knocking but there were very hostile people when I did
- “ The atmosphere at Saint Stevens Church although a little aggressive was nothing like the viciousness of 2025 campaign. [REDACTED] himself approached voters in 2022 with lies about [REDACTED] but that again was not nearly as bad as the viciousness we were confronted with this year.

Quantitative questions

- ☐ Most respondents to the survey held back from campaigning in certain areas. This was mostly around the South Caulfield and Glen Huntly areas.
 - Over 40% of respondents would not wear non-[REDACTED] branded material in certain areas, and a similar number refused to campaign in those areas.
 - Smaller numbers did not put a sign on their fence (29%) and would not put a sticker on their car (20%)
- “ Always very careful in South Caulfield, Elsternwick and Glenhuntly
- “ I went ahead with all the above, but must say at times it felt the bravest thing I’ve ever done in my life
- “ I was careful and tried to be aware of my surroundings and street wise
- “ I would caution against sending young or inexperienced volunteers in future
- ☐ 72% of respondents reported that they felt a threat level of between 6-10 on a scale of 1-10 from those claiming to act on behalf of the Jewish community. The most common response was 10 (21%)
- ☐ The question of whether the actions of those claiming to act for the Jewish community impacted mental health, there were 63% of respondents who recorded a result between 7-10.
- ☐ In response to the question: Do you feel that you have been harmed by the actions of the Jewish community's leadership during this campaign 62% responded with a 10.
- ☐ In response to the question: Do you feel that your connection to the community has changed because of your experiences on the campaign, only 1 respondent recorded a response less than 5. The plurality of respondents (30%) recorded a 10.

Antisemitism in the campaign

- ☐ 18C
 - The campaign of the [REDACTED] party would have a case to answer under 18C of the racial discrimination act
 - There were numerous instances where Jews were offended, insulted and humiliated because of their support for non-[REDACTED] candidates
 - Examples of this were recorded elsewhere in my submission, but the suggestion that someone is a ‘bad Jew’ because of their vote or any

one of many other attacks over the course of the campaign are examples that may become actionable

- Whether this extends to legal action against the campaign where these attacks originated is an untested question
- Another untested question is would the protections of 18C protect a Jew who has been intimidated or humiliated by another Jew for their beliefs as a Jew
- The protections of 18C are reasonable, but it needs to be extended to protect groups during a campaign
 - This change could also have helped control some of the vitriol that was seen against the Indigenous population during the referendum, and against same sex couples during the plebiscite
- Because of the finite nature of an election campaign it is necessary to set up an expedited process
 - The advantage of being able to attack other religions or races and only facing consequences well after the election has concluded is not good enough. The potentially guilty parties will have long been seated in parliament. As mentioned above the AEC should put in all efforts to make a decision within 24-48 hours

☐ Antisemitism

- Antisemitism has become a major issue
 - As with all hate, it needs to be stamped out
 - Over policing can potentially lead to an increase
- There needs to be a division between three broad categories and this can also potentially be used to define hatred toward other groups
 - Antisemites
 - ☐ These people exist and hate Jews for a variety of reasons
 - ☐ We should not be too quick to label people as antisemites because of a potential over-reaction, and people who may fall into the other categories may become antisemitic in reaction to being labelled as such
 - ☐ Once it becomes clear that someone is antisemitic and the benefit of the doubt can no longer be given to them, there should be serious consequences
 - ☐ We should make all effort to drive out their voices from the public discourse as we should with all forms of hate
 - Antisemitic actions and statements
 - ☐ In my experience the vast majority of Australians are not antisemitic, but many will engage in antisemitism
 - ☐ Often the average person on the street is not aware of the origins of what they are saying, and will use antisemitic tropes through lack of knowledge

- ☐ Statements such as Soros, globalist, bankers, Hollywood elite all have their roots in antisemitic literature, and yet are used regularly, even by Jews, without understanding these origins
 - ☐ The concept of Judeo-Christian civilization has its origins in antisemitic far-right religious groups
 - ☐ Attacks on Israel are not necessarily antisemitic
 - ☐ A lot of the commentary around the Gaza war is a reasonable critique of Israel's policies
 - ☐ However, many attacks against Israel are antisemitic. For example: the suggestion that Israel is an illegitimate state, that Jews have no historical connection to the land, the 1970s UN resolution that 'Zionism is racism' and many other statements on the subject cross the line between antisemitism and legitimate critique
- The third category is not antisemitic, but as a reaction to Jewish history and the constant pogroms and attacks on Jewish communities of Europe, the Jewish community is hyper-sensitive to perceived antisemitism
 - ☐ This is not necessarily antisemitic but there needs to be an understanding of cultural sensitivities when dealing with certain communities
 - ☐ I am aware of several Jews who considered building a hidden room in their house just in case. Jews who do not travel will maintain their passports to be able to get out of the country quickly
 - ☐ So when people suggest even innocuous things these will trigger an out of proportion response by the community
- Of all the definitions of antisemitism, many governments have accepted the IHRA definition, even with its flaws. This includes the major parties in Australia. The [REDACTED] volunteers are guilty of antisemitism by this definition
 - If someone were to say that 'good Jews' must vote for a particular party, that would likely be considered antisemitic under this definition
 - The charge of antisemitism was thrown at most non-Jewish, non-[REDACTED] candidates, often on very flimsy pretexts, and at other times without any proof at all
 - I personally knew several candidates that were accused of antisemitism and in every case I am confident in saying these were false accusations
- I do not know how this can be policed during an election campaign
 - The recommendations by the special envoy on antisemitism is inadequate and did not acknowledge the challenges during the campaign period

- Perhaps cases of hate can cause an election to be overturned even when it has been determined that the hate-speech was not the determining factor in the final result
- Candidates that have had their elections overturned for hate speech should be ineligible to run in any subsequent by-election
- Leaders of the Jewish community are not necessarily reflective of the community
 - The leadership in various forms has caused many to feel unwelcome or unsafe in the community
 - I have heard of many moving synagogues or withdrawing from communal life altogether because of their actions during the campaign
 - It was reported that the antisemitism envoy would not condemn antisemitism of the extreme right at the anti-immigration protests
 - Unity over the past few years has become a 'join us' proposition, not an 'accepting a diverse range of opinions'
 - If Jews are feeling unsafe in their own community the leadership has failed regardless of any other action they engage in
- Recommendations
 - The AEC cannot control which communities set up communal debates, but these debates should be registered as official campaign events and therefore have rules around them
 - Each debate needs to be registered and requires balance and fairness to each candidate present
 - Crowd unruliness and intimidation is not permitted and it is on the event to control the crowd, with consequences for the event and the candidate involved in the intimidation should they fail
 - As an official campaign event, some restrictions on how campaigning happens there, such as exclusion zones similar to booths, or the venue is required to provide space for all relevant campaigns
 - Declaration of third party allegiances
 - I am against the new Victorian system where campaign volunteers need to register with the VEC
 - However, if the Commonwealth decides to follow this path the volunteers for candidates who are also volunteering for third parties can be cross checked to see if they are also members/volunteers of political parties. They will have to declare this dual allegiance
 - Third parties that have connection to each other or to a political party must declare it. This includes two groups that share office space, directors etc
 - There must be restrictions (or better enforce the current restrictions) on groups with tax benefits campaigning
 - This includes companies that are receiving government welfare such as fossil fuel industry

- This includes industry lobby groups, as above these need to be declared
- A fossil fuel lobby that is funded by the fossil fuel industry will also have these restrictions on them
- Any third party group that does not reveal the source of their funding should have restrictions on their ability to campaign
- Intimidation and bullying should be policed more closely. The law are already on the books to limit most of the bad faith actions, but it is not properly enforced. The AEC should have an arm specifically dedicated to finding and enforcing these rules in a more timely manner
 - This change will either clean up our elections or it will pay for itself in fines. That is a win-win.
- Do not want to have situations such as what happened to [REDACTED] in the UK
 - [REDACTED]
 - There were definite similarities between that campaign and what happened in Goldstein this campaign
 - Speak with UK government and work with them to stamp out this behaviour from elections in both countries
 - Do not want to end up in the hyper-partisan anti-democratic model that is American elections, so it needs to be stamped out now
- It was reported that Iran was behind at least some of the antisemitism
 - This is a foreign country interfering in our election and skewing the results
 - While it is unlikely that there was collusion between foreign governments and any political party, it is still intolerable that there be any interference of this nature
- Using synagogues as a campaign hub for the [REDACTED] party
 - [REDACTED] was not invited to the synagogues in the electorate to address the community
 - [REDACTED] campaigned with various synagogues and with communal rabbis in 2022, and even spoke from the pulpit at South Caulfield Hebrew Congregation
 - There was open campaigning happening from the pulpit in the 2025 campaign at Caulfield Hebrew Congregation
 - Since the election [REDACTED] has been at St Kilda Hebrew Congregation
 - There was at least 1 synagogue with a [REDACTED] party billboard on its fence
 - Religious institutions receive Commonwealth money and the communal expectation is that they are not involved in campaigning
 - A similar experience was reported from the booths in Kooyong and Goldstein with regard to the Exclusive Bretheren, where their volunteering seemed to be centrally organised
 - The open campaigning inside synagogues contributed to the sense of alienation that some of the campaign volunteers felt

- Places of worship, schools and other communal infrastructure that receives government funding should have restrictions on their ability to campaign as an institution, in order to facilitate communal cohesion after the election

Appendix

Of all those who responded to the survey, one in particular stood out for the detail provided. The person who wrote it was [REDACTED], a [REDACTED] volunteer. Her response was not used for the above summary and is provided here in full with her permission.

Are there any specific incidents of bullying or aggression related to the issue of antisemitism and/or Israel that you recall during the campaign?

Please include the following information for each incident:

My entire experience of pre-poll, polling day and much of the campaign was tainted by poison directed at [REDACTED] and us volunteers as proxies, for her critical support of Israel, support for humanitarian aid for Gaza and a conflation of that criticism with the false notion that she is antisemitic.

My role with [REDACTED]'s office during her term and subsequently with her re-election campaign was as her Jewish community liaison. In this capacity, I organised a Jewish leaders' roundtable, a Courage to Care event, accompanied her to a few events and stood in for her at one.

Doorknocking. A sub-group of volunteers took it upon ourselves to doorknock in the areas of Caulfield South, Glenhuntly and Brighton East. During this period, doors were slammed in our faces, [REDACTED] was called antisemitic which obviously generalised to us as her representatives and people refused to read the brochure we'd published.. We never imagined that we would turn the area around but hoped that we could stem the tide of disinformation with face-to-face encounters and actual information about what [REDACTED] truly believes and what she'd done for the community since October 7th.

The most egregious events were the Brighton shul candidates' night and pre-poll at St. Stephen's in North Brighton.

Brighton Pre-Poll. I'll be honest, I am not able to remember in all cases which third party groups were the offenders.

I witnessed:

Repeal the Teal was the strongest presence in my experience at pre-poll. Although they claimed, to me personally, that they had no candidate, I witnessed a [REDACTED] volunteer asking a RTT volunteer if she could borrow her t-shirt and witnessed volunteers from both parties exchanging t-shirts.

By report:

A RTT volunteer strode up and down the voter queue telling voters to put [REDACTED] last, shoving her *magen David* into their faces and asking "Are you a Jew?" urging them to put [REDACTED] last and spouting disinformation.

My husband was told that if I was volunteering for [REDACTED] then I was a self-hating Jew.

TPGs yelled at me and other volunteers calling [REDACTED] a supporter of Hamas and a terrorist. This is bullying of volunteers by association with [REDACTED]

The abundance of posters depicting [REDACTED] in distorted images was horrific and difficult to face. I am no pushover and I have never had to muster so much courage.

My husband witnessed one of our friends with RTT desperately running up the queue and yelling when she could not find a place to put her poster.

[REDACTED] was present during much of this intimidation and bullying -- standing as close as possible to the polling place -- and never exerted any influence to get his or TPG volunteers to behave civilly to opposing candidates or to voters.

Even neo-Nazis were present [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Brighton Shul.

Bullying, intimidation and the intent to embarrass, by both supporters and moderators, set the entire tone for the Brighton shul candidates' forum at which roughly 50 [REDACTED] volunteers, including me, were present. It is intrinsically intimidating to attend an event sponsored by organisations "representing" the Jewish community but blatantly siding with only one political side and allowing bullying of the other. It was as if I, as a Jew, and the other Jews present from [REDACTED]'s campaign, did not count as Jews.

By report: A volunteer came to me as the organiser of [REDACTED]'s participation in the event, and told me that a [REDACTED] supporter had just literally shoved her off her seat.

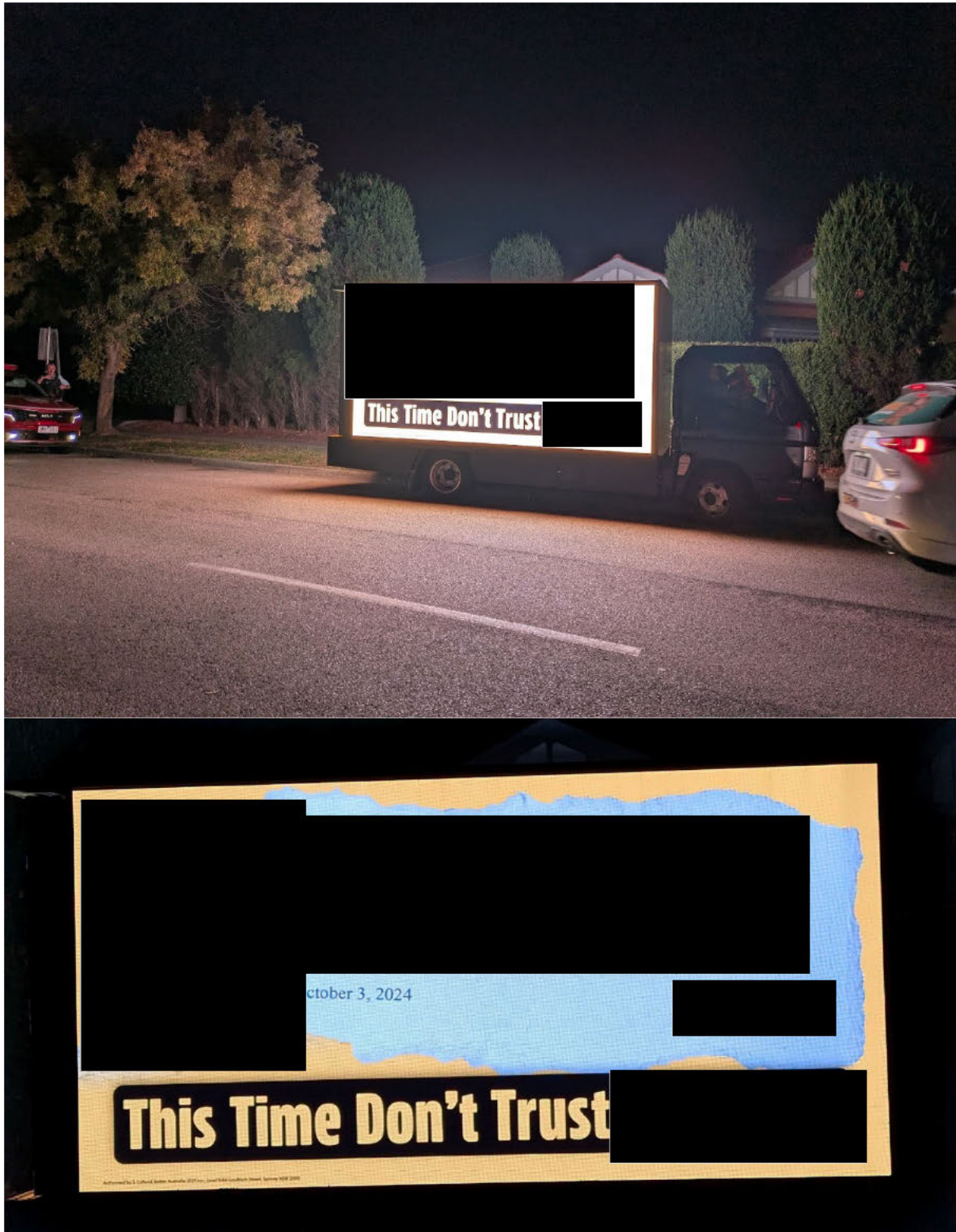
Me personally (along with others):

1. The moderators of the event promised the participants that violations of civil disagreement and the spirit of *machloket l'shem shamayim* would be followed by a warning after the first offense and ejection after the second. The moderators did nothing about the boos, shouting, interruptions, mocking, smears and disparagement from the [REDACTED] Party candidate's supporters. [REDACTED] was present during all of this and did nothing to urge civil behaviour.
2. The forum organisers invited registrants to submit questions to be asked of the two candidates. I organised for our volunteers to submit several questions. *The moderators allowed not a single question submitted on behalf of our roughly 50 supporters present.* Because [REDACTED] was constantly interrupted and shouted down, no fair questions were put to [REDACTED].

The most important question I was planning to ask was, in light of [REDACTED]'s propaganda that [REDACTED] was antisemitic: "Antisemitism in our communities did not begin on October 7th. In fact, there were, according to the ECAJ, over 300 incidents annually from 2019 - 2020 and 2018 - 2019 and earlier years [during [REDACTED]]. With the understanding that past performance is the best predictor of future performance, what actions did you take about these?" **This was bullying.**

3. Trucks outside the shul displayed misleading information about [REDACTED] with a distorted image of her intended to persuade voters. These trucks and the presence of supporters blocking the door to the shul were very intimidating to [REDACTED] supporters. [REDACTED] was also provided with misinformation about when the shul doors would be open with the result that opposition supporters were there first.

The “Better Australia” logo can be seen on the upper left corner of the sign on the truck.



4. When my fellow [REDACTED] supporters approached the forum with trepidation knowing how abysmally [REDACTED]'s supporters had treated [REDACTED] abysmally at the In One Voice festival -- calling her antisemitic to her face, stalking me, trying to tip water on her -- I reassured them saying that there was no way the JCCV and fellow major Jewish organisations would allow abuse to occur. I was a fool.

5. The **In One Voice** Jewish cultural festival was another display of hatred and aggression toward [REDACTED] and those of us accompanying her. During this event *I personally* was stalked by [REDACTED] supporters. When I asked her to step back, she asked “Why should I?”

When [REDACTED] and I visited a booth and were chatting with the representative there, event security approached the booth and asked “Are you okay?” [REDACTED] answered “yes” and the security man said “You don’t matter.” He was evidently checking that we were not harassing the organisation’s representative.

The 2022 campaign surfaced hatred of [REDACTED] as well. I was wearing a [REDACTED] t-shirt and my hamsa and a woman in a car shouted at me that I should be ashamed as a Jew to be supporting [REDACTED]. Another volunteer reported to me actually being spat at.

Refrain. Although I often wore a [REDACTED] t-shirt, there were times I chose not to because of fear of being sneered and yelled at, called a self-hating Jew, told that [REDACTED] was antisemitic, etc.. I could handle it, but it was exhausting essentially wearing a target. We feared having our car vandalised because of the decal on the rear window. I checked the poster on our fence every day to see if it had been vandalised. I was constantly vigilant.

The events resulted in deterioration of volunteers’ mental health, including mine. I am a campaign veteran but have never seen this kind of misconduct.