

Submission to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Electoral Matters

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

September 12, 2025

Committee Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters

Inquiry into the 2025 Federal Election

1. Introduction

I welcome the opportunity to make a submission to the Committee. I am writing in my capacity as a volunteer during the 2025 Federal Election campaign for [REDACTED] candidate for Kooyong.

My submission relates to incidents of bullying behaviour directed towards me at a polling booth by [REDACTED], who was a candidate at the election. These experiences raise important concerns about the treatment of volunteers and the safe, respectful operation of polling booths.

2. Context

Polling places are critical spaces in Australia's democratic process. They must be accessible, safe, and free from intimidation, both for voters and for the volunteers who staff them. Campaign volunteers play a vital role in ensuring voters are informed and supported, and it is essential that they can carry out this role without harassment or bullying.

When elected representatives themselves engage in inappropriate conduct at polling booths, it undermines both public confidence in the fairness of the process and the willingness of community members to participate as volunteers.

3. Specific Concerns

During the 2025 election campaign, I experienced two incidents at a polling booth involving [REDACTED] which I would characterise as bullying and intimidating.

- **First occasion:** While I was stationed at Blackburn Pre-poll centre, [REDACTED] deliberately stood very close to me, despite there being ample space available and no

one else nearby. He did not acknowledge or engage with me. This felt like an invasion of my personal space and created a sense of intimidation.

- **Second occasion:** On the next day, after I took a photo of a truck carrying a large anti-█████ sign driving through the carpark, ██████ approached me from behind and asked, “*Are you in the habit of filming people in public?*”
 - Noticing my confusion, he added, “*I saw you filming me just then.*” I clarified that I had not filmed him, only photographed the truck, and that he was not in the frame.
 - In fact, the only time I had photographed him was the previous day, when he was positioned directly at the booth entrance handing out how-to-vote material to a voter — a clear breach of the six-metre exclusion zone. Copies of the photographs are attached to this submission.
 - When I asked why he had made such an accusation, ██████ dismissed it by saying, “*It was just a question,*” yet continued pacing back and forth in front of me inside the exclusion zone.
 - When I reminded him to observe the six-metre rule, he challenged me by asking, “*Are you saying this to me or to everyone else?*” I replied that I was saying it to everyone, but especially him given his apparent sense of entitlement. He eventually walked away and did not approach me again.
- **Impact on me personally:** Both incidents left me feeling uncomfortable, intimidated, and undermined in my role as a volunteer. The false accusation of filming was particularly distressing.
- **Impact on democracy:** Such behaviour towards volunteers risks deterring community members from participating in elections, creates an atmosphere of hostility at polling places, and erodes trust in the fairness and civility of democratic processes. Furthermore, ignoring or testing the six-metre exclusion zone undermines the integrity of polling booth rules designed to protect voters.

4. Recommendations

To protect volunteers and strengthen electoral integrity at polling places, I respectfully recommend the Committee consider:

1. Establishing clear standards of conduct for candidates and elected representatives at polling booths.
2. Providing the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) with stronger powers to investigate and sanction instances of bullying, intimidation, or harassment at polling places.

3. Reinforcing the six-metre exclusion zone rules with clearer signage, training, and enforcement powers for booth officials.

5. Conclusion

The health of Australian democracy depends not only on the fairness of the vote itself but also on ensuring that polling places are welcoming, safe, and respectful environments.

The behaviour I experienced from [REDACTED] during the 2025 election highlights the need for stronger protections and enforcement measures at polling booths. By addressing these issues, the Committee can help ensure that future elections uphold the highest standards of integrity and civility.

I would welcome the opportunity to provide further detail, should the Committee find it useful.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]





