

Police treated worse than crooks: Lee

Country Alliance's candidate for the Northern Victoria Region, Danny Lee, has called for an urgent review of the powers and procedures of the Office of Police Integrity.

“When a police officer is under investigation, and is required to attend a hearing called by the OPI, they are treated in a manner which society would not tolerate even the very worst criminal being subjected to,” he said.

Mr Lee said that police officers required to appear before the OPI are not allowed to inform any other person, including their immediate family, of their appearance and breaching this rule carried a penalty of twenty thousand dollars or twelve months imprisonment. He also said it was unfair for the police officers to have restricted representation and not able to refuse to answer questions without obtaining a certificate on the ground of self incrimination.

“The OPI hold private hearings which are not bound by criminal laws and procedures. Only after these private hearings at which they, under normal circumstances, gather illegal evidence against the Police, do they hold public hearings,” he said.

“The role of stopping Police corruption has been the responsibility of the Police Ethical Standards Department. This has stood the test of time and been very successful in guarding the public from illegal and corrupt Police behaviour.”

Mr Lee said the public expects the Police to protect them from criminals. He said there was a risk police will find it difficult to recruit new members if they are treated worse than the criminals they apprehend. He said that if elected, he will insist on a review of the OPI and the Police receive the same treatment under the law as other citizens.

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