

The Facts

Since the by-election there has been a narrative that has developed amongst some members regarding the sabotage of our campaign to win Batman.

The narrative suggests that those who participated in the complaint against Alex, which requested her disendorsement and expulsion, are merely innocent parties in this action and that the real villains are the leakers of the complaint.

This is simply not true.

The reason this narrative is false is this: The front page of the document requesting Alex's disendorsement and expulsion included a thinly veiled threat – that suggested if Alex was not disendorsed – the signatories would not guarantee that leaks would not occur during the campaign.

Let me use their words here: "Some have been approached by journalists, aware of internal Darebin conflict, and have only been convinced not to speak out about their experiences, because this action has been organised. Those of us organising this process are struggling to keep people with us, dealing with this problem in-house. This s12 process is our last resort"

Well, their last resort failed. Alex was not disendorsed or expelled, and leaks occurred during the campaign.

The name of every complainant was on that cover letter. Each one of those complainants was therefore aware of the possible consequences of their actions and proceeded anyway. Each one must bear responsibility for the leaks that subsequently occurred.

As someone who has seen the document, I can bear witness to this truth.

Any member is of course entitled to raise a complaint, but as Sarah Russell so aptly put it, 18 people making a collective complaint is not a complaint – it is a political act. In this case, an act of political bastardry.

From my reading of the document, and the complaints within, it just does not meet the political smell test. There are so many red flags.

Some of the complaints raised happened well over a year ago – in one case 14 years ago. Members have a right to ask - why did the complainants not raise their issues through the proper party processes at the time? Why wait – until we stood on the doorstep of a winnable by-election?

One of the contributors [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] hosted a meet the candidate event for Ged Kearney during the Batman by-election campaign [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

And what of the actual gripes of these people who put forward the 101-page document? Just how serious were they? As we have seen in the media, perhaps they are best encapsulated by the statement that 'Alex unfriended me on Facebook'. Or, 'Alex stood in front of me in a photo.' There is evidence one had already been sent to probity – where it was subsequently rejected.

This is the kind of stuff the destruction of a person's reputation and career boiled down to. Frivolous and pathetic rubbish that would be eviscerated by any half decent lawyer in litigation.

As I've said - there were so many red flags around this complaint: the highly organised nature of it; the fact that no federal member of parliament or state office bearer was approached to assist with any issues prior to launching these proceedings; the fact that it was timed to exert maximum damage to Alex and her campaign; the frivolous and vexatious nature of the complaints [REDACTED].

The fact it was ever seriously considered by the state co-convenors is a serious indictment on them and their political judgement.

Members may also wish to know the fact - that this is the first time in 17 years as a member that any formal complaint has been raised against Alex. Yet one of the contributors has sought fit to continue the smear campaign against Alex since the election, in a Facebook post that alleged Alex had been the subject of many complaints over the years. This is just one more untruth – one more vicious, defamatory and damaging lie.

Members need to know, this document didn't just appear out of thin air. Its production was highly organised and its underlying strategy planned over a considerable period of time. The organisation even included the establishment of a secret Facebook page to coordinate the activities of this group within the Darebin Greens.

Members – this was not a complaint. This was never a complaint. This was a highly organised conspiracy to destroy Alex's political career and her campaign. The complaint was merely the vehicle that enabled the conspiracy and the shield that hid - and continues to hide - the conspirators. Let me roll that shield away a little. This conspiracy could never have happened without the willing participation and complicity of all four Darebin Greens councillors.

One of the core values of our party is peace and non-violence, but the trauma inflicted on Alex by these conspirators over the past two months was an act of violence. This violence against Alex was not physical – but it had physical effects. This violence was psychological and emotional – but violence nonetheless.

The actions of these people did not just have a serious adverse impact on Alex's mental health – it had a massive adverse and traumatic impact on the mental health of her husband and children as well. Unlike the trivial claims of the conspirators, Alex's children have **actually** been bullied at school, as a result of these people calling Alex a bully. These people should hang their heads in shame.

The psychological violence against Alex has continued since the election, with one conspirator, in a truly sickening facebook post, lauding Alex's contribution over the past 16 years and wishing her luck at the next federal election. Having stood like a coward in the shadows of anonymity to knife Alex in the back and sabotage her campaign, this person then saw fit to twist that knife after she had lost. That person is [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

As David Morrison put it so eloquently, the standards you walk past are the standards you accept. The highly coordinated, organised and vicious conspiracy to destroy Alex and her campaign can never be deemed acceptable. Violence perpetrated against anyone must never be a standard we are prepared to walk by and accept. If the actions of these individuals were to be swept under the carpet, then as a party we must acknowledge that our much-vaunted pillar of peace and non-violence is nothing but a sham and a hollow lie.

I stand with Alex. Violence in any form must remain the very antithesis of who and what we are. Our pillars must stand. For the sake of our party – these people must resign and if not – then they must be expelled.