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MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday, 17 April 2008

Police need help to rid Geelong of violent assaults

The State Government needs to provide police with more resources so they can rid Geelong of violent assaults, says David Koch, Member for Western Victoria.

In raising community concern about recent violent daytime assaults in Geelong's CBD, and public complaints of an inadequate police presence, David Koch told Parliament this week of several incidents in early April.

"A lunchtime assault on Thursday, 3 April resulted in a man being stabbed in a crowded Geelong café where he sought shelter after he was punched outside by a woman who followed him inside and stabbed him in full view of terrified diners.

"The owner of the café said that while she was fed up with violence in Little Malop Street, it had not surprised her *as this sort of thing happens nearly every day.*

"Then on Friday, 4 April there was an unprovoked group bashing of a young male, again in Little Malop Street, where the high school student sustained serious injuries, including shocking bruising to the head and face.

"Earlier on the same day, security cameras captured a man using a baseball bat to shatter the windows of businesses in Little Malop and Moorabool Streets. The same cameras also recorded two separate brawls on the footpath during the previous evening, one where a man had a bottle shattered over his head.

"And on Sunday, 6 April another vicious assault took place, this time on a 16 year-old girl, her mother and grandmother as they walked along Moorabool Street in broad daylight at 1.30 on a Sunday afternoon. Two young women have since appeared in Geelong Magistrates' Court charged over this vicious assault.

"Of concern to the community are reports that according to the Geelong City police station roster, less than 20 uniform police are on patrol during a shift.

"Police are clearly stretched to the point where they are not able to provide a satisfactory presence or deterrent on the city streets, especially in what have become known trouble spots, despite the region's Assistant Commissioner, Sandra Nicholson, saying that *Geelong does not have a police shortage and is very well looked after with sufficient police in Geelong.*

"The Geelong Advertiser reflected on these serious and violent assaults in its editorial of 8 April, *where reports continue unabated of disturbing violence on Geelong's streets as police complain yet again of undermanning and the public complains of an inadequate police presence.*

"I have called on the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Bob Cameron, to listen to the people of Geelong and give police what they need to rid this violence from Geelong's streets", said David Koch.

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