

BURNING SINCE 1854

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By HENRIETTA COOK

PROTECTIVE services officers are handing out hundreds of fines to disabled, mentally ill and homeless people for minor infringements.

In one case, protective services officers fined a teenager with a severe intellectual disability 13 times in two months for riding his bike on a platform, failing to wear a helmet, failing to have a bike light and obstructing a pathway by sitting on steps. Some of the fines were issued 20 minutes apart.

Community legal centres say the officers issue infringement

notices so often because they are bored.

"We are concerned someone with a mental illness or intellectual disability will be shot," said Hugh de Kretser, executive officer of the Federation of Community Legal Services. "It's a recipe for a potentially volatile situation when you have armed PSOs who are very bored sitting on train stations with little to do."

More than 6000 fines have been issued by the armed guards since they were deployed at railway stations in February – 3000 in the past three months alone – as a key part of the Bail-

ieu government's tough-on-crime agenda.

"It appears they are not using their discretionary power appropriately," said Jordana Cohen, a lawyer at the Youthlaw community legal centre. "Their role is supposed to be making people feel safe, not issuing them with fines."

Ms Cohen said PSOs often descended on Flinders Street and Southern Cross stations as part of their training and issued dozens of fines to young people, many of whom were homeless or had mental health issues.

"Young people are free game for them to practise their fine-

writing skills. It seems young people are their training target," she said.

Ms Cohen said PSOs needed more training on how to deal with people who were homeless, mentally ill and disabled. "These are people who must make use of public space by virtue of the fact they have nowhere else to go."

The director of civil justice access and equity at Victoria Legal Aid, Kristen Hilton, said PSOs needed more training on the purpose of issuing fines.

"They are not meant to be punitive to people who are already really vulnerable. They

are supposed to be about keeping the community safe."

Ms Hilton visited a client with severe schizophrenia who has received fines for thousands of dollars for putting his feet on train seats, littering and travelling without a valid ticket. The client's mother had explained that "he is not a drug addict, he just has severe schizophrenia. He has money on his card but forgets to tap on and off."

A spokeswoman for Police Minister Peter Ryan said PSOs underwent 12 weeks of extensive training that included the same level of firearms and defence skills as police. They

also received specific training on dealing with vulnerable or mentally ill people.

"Suggestions that PSOs are issuing infringements or are at risk of shooting someone with a mental illness or disability because they are bored are completely offensive," she said.

A spokesman for Attorney-General Robert Clark said the government was looking at ways to improve its fines and infringement enforcement system. A police spokeswoman said PSOs had the same discretionary powers as police and people could dispute fines if they wished to.

Doyle backers revealed

Lord mayor bankrolled by property, gaming sectors

By ROYCE MILLAR
MELISSA FYFE
and CRAIG BUTT

AFTER months of secrecy, lord mayor Robert Doyle has revealed who bankrolled his \$400,000 campaign for a second term at Town Hall: Melbourne's property, liquor and gaming industries.

Developers and builders – many seeking council support

for their projects – tipped in more than \$100,000 to Team Doyle, with young Chinese developer Richard Gu contributing \$20,000 and another \$11,500 to a team led by Docklands cruise operator Keith Rankin, who is believed to have run as support for Cr Doyle.

Through a string of obscure companies, low-profile but busy Melbourne developer Clement Lee donated about \$37,000 to Cr

Doyle while pioneering apartment developer Central Equity contributed \$10,000.

Campaign funding lists lodged at Town Hall on Thursday show that, with campaign outlays of \$372,000, Cr Doyle easily outspent his rivals.

His No. 1 councillor candidate, Kevin Louey, yesterday declared an additional \$10,500 including \$8000 from the Chinese Masonic Society.

The total spend for all Melbourne City candidates was about \$800,000, although a final and formal total remained unclear because some declarations were outstanding late Thursday. *The Age* estimates



Cr Robert Doyle

that challenger and former deputy mayor Gary Singer cobbled together donations of about \$66,000, many of which were also from developers.

Among the contributors to the Doyle campaign were developers believed to have attended controversial closed-door meetings with Cr Louey.

During the election campaign, *The Age* revealed that Cr Louey had organised meetings

at which developers were each asked for tens of thousands of dollars for the Doyle campaign in return for Town Hall access.

The Age understands that among those invited were prominent Asian developers active in the central city, including Mr Gu of the AXF Group, Clement Lee and representatives of high-rise builder the Brady Group. Companies and/or individuals associated with all three donated to Team Doyle.

In the lead-up to the October poll, *The Age* revealed concerns by at least one developer who attended the meetings that Cr Louey had indicated that a donation to the Doyle team

would help secure access to Town Hall.

"It was clear the money would be used for Mr Doyle's reelection," the source said at the time. "It was clearly about those matters of access."

The Victorian Local Government Inspectorate will investigate the cash-for-access allegations as well as a revelation by *The Age* that the council's planning chairman, Ken Ong, was offered a bribe by an Asian developer in 2010. Mr Ong refused the bribe.

During October *The Age* asked candidates to disclose the sources of donations as part of a

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Doyle bankrolled by property, liquor and gaming sectors

ROBERT DOYLE'S \$400,000 WAR CHEST

AMONG THE CONTRIBUTORS



Developer
Richard Gu
AXF

Prominent young developer with strong town hall ties and skyscraper plan for Total car park in Chinatown.

Donation:
\$20,000
to Doyle team



Developer
Eddie Kutner
Central Equity

One of the most active apartment developers in City of Melbourne

Donation:
\$10,000



Hotels lobby
and chief
Peter Burnett
Australian
Hotels
Association

Lobby group representing liquor and gaming interests dependent on council support for licences.

Donation:
\$41,000
in AHA and personal donations



Developer
Clement Lee
Busy but low-profile city developer known for projects on Yarra north bank

Donation: Through a string of at least seven companies Lee contributed about

\$87,000



Lord Mayor Robert Doyle

drive for greater transparency on campaign funding. Of nine teams, only Team Doyle and one other, Mr Rankin's Forward Together, did not participate. The 2012 Doyle campaign outlay was four times the \$81,000 his team declared at the 2008 election and helped secure five of the 11 council positions. As historically has been the case, the liquor and gaming industries were generous donors this year.

Cr Doyle, who recently opposed a push to impose higher rates on poker machine venues such as Crown Casino, received a \$500 donation from Peter Crinis, the executive general manager of Crown Hotels and Retail.

The Queensberry Hotel, which this year received approval for 30 poker machines, also contributed \$500.

Cr Doyle's campaign coffers were also boosted by \$5000 from pubs, a sector that has been wary of further restrictions after related violence.

The CBD's Mitre Tavern donated, as did several bars in Docklands. But pubs outside the Mornington and Cranbourne – also donated.

Paul O'Brien, the owner of Red Rock Leisure – the company behind the Eureka Skydeck, the Tramcar Restaurant and PJ O'Brien's bar in Southbank – donated \$500 to the Doyle campaign.

The Australian Hotels Association, which lobbies behind the scenes to head off further regulation of drinking venues and the serving of alcohol, and for 2008 election and helped secure five of the 11 council positions. Several investment bankers and investment fund managers contributed small amounts to Cr Doyle, as did a number of Liberal Party members.

Deputy mayor Susan Riley contributed \$20,000 from her company Melbourne Media to Mr Singer, Sotheby's Australia chief executive and a lord mayor candidate, courted the big end of town, notably at a fund-raising lunch for a group of developers at Crown's Atlantic restaurant.

Developers and businessmen who attended included Tony Schiavello of the Schiavello group; Eddie Kutner, chairman of Melbourne-based property developer Central Equity; developer Adam Garison; and Richard Wong, publisher of *The Asian Executive* magazine.

Cr Doyle did not return calls on Thursday.