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Wesa Chau
DEPUTY LORD MAYOR CANDIDATE
LABOR FOR CITY OF MELBOURNE

Victorian
Labor

MEDIA STATEMENT

Like any Australian, I fulfilled my democratic rights and obligations by volunteering and participating in a Senate inquiry into issues facing diaspora communities in Australia.

I had every intention of presenting my experience, expertise and insights into these important issues during the public hearing. Instead, I had my loyalty, allegiance and commitment to Australia repeatedly challenged and questioned by Senator Eric Abetz.

Through the use of intimation and bullying tactics that can be described as race-baiting McCarthyism, myself and two other Chinese-Australian witnesses were subjected to a public loyalty test where Senator Abetz demanded that we "unequivocally condemn" the Chinese Communist Party.

Ironically, my presentation pointed out that every time a person of Chinese appearance put their hands up for public office, their loyalty and allegiance to Australia is questioned. Senator Abetz's behaviour just proved my point.

Then there was Senator Concetta Fierravanti-Wells who suggested that "certain communities just don't want to participate" in democracy and that her advice to me is "go and read the Constitution". What I can say to Senator Fierravanti-Wells is that the Australian Constitution is fundamentally racist as it prevents First Australians to fully participate in Australian society. Senator Fierravanti-Wells's comments were ignorant, offensive and quite simply out of touch.

The federal Coalition government must stop dividing and bullying communities into silence and submission. First, we had Peter Dutton playing the politics of division with rhetoric that Melbourne is unsafe and taken over by "African gangs". I will not be surprised if Senator Abetz comes out tomorrow to say all Chinese are spies and therefore we need to abolish Chinatowns across Australia.

I have been fighting for multiculturalism, cultural diversity and equality for 20 years and will continue to stand up to the federal Coalition government's unfair treatment and racism towards ethnic and culturally diverse communities.

We cannot be bystanders in this debate, we must stand up for Chinese-Australians, we must stand by African-Australians and we must step up for all diverse communities. The most effective way to do so is to encourage more Australians from



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multicultural backgrounds to stand for public office and further participate in our democracy.

I am the only candidate in the City of Melbourne council election with a long and consistent track record of activism for multiculturalism, diversity and inclusion.

If elected, Labor for Melbourne will reassess City of Melbourne's current portfolio and committee system and make diversity and inclusion a key portfolio to ensure racism has no place in Melbourne, and that cultural diversity is a key consideration at the centre of policy implementation and decision making.

I am proud to be a member of the Labor for Melbourne team that strives to engage residents, empower communities, support local businesses and build an inclusive city.

Wesa Chau is Labor's Deputy Lord Mayor candidate for the City of Melbourne