

Australian candidate apologises for lewd website

SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA: An Australian candidate for national parliament was on Tuesday (20 August) forced to apologise for a personal website which reportedly carried hundreds of lewd jokes and in which he referred to "tit banter".



Conservative Liberal Party candidate Kevin Baker, who is standing for the seat of Charlton north of Sydney on 7 September's national elections, has since shut down his site for Mini Cooper car enthusiasts which also reportedly contained references to incest and racism.

The Sydney Daily Telegraph reported that the website included jokes about the Pope being a paedophile, and others making light of incest and child abuse and discussing scenarios in which women had sex on pool tables.

It said in one post Baker, who is the director of a children's charity, had written: "Seems a bit like 'Tit Banter'..."

"On the site I made comments that were inappropriate, which I deeply regret and for which I apologise unreservedly," Baker said.

"In the last few years I have also failed to moderate the site properly. A number of statements have been made by participants that are also completely inappropriate. I have now shut the offending site down."

Labour's campaign spokeswoman Penny Wong, the finance minister, called on opposition leader Tony Abbott, the frontrunner to become prime minister in next month's polls, to sever his ties with Baker.

"The Liberal candidate for Charlton, Kevin Baker, is reported in newspapers as operating a website that makes jokes about subjects such as incest and domestic violence," Wong told a press conference. "These are not jokes and this is a very serious matter."

Earlier this month Labour Prime Minister Kevin Rudd dumped a candidate for a safe seat in Victoria state over his verbal abuse of a disabled woman more than a decade ago.

Abbott acknowledged that Baker had "done the wrong thing" but refused to say whether he would withdraw his endorsement.

"He has abjectly apologised as he should and the site has been closed down," Abbott said, adding that he would receive a further briefing on the matter.

Source: AFP via I-Net Bridge

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