

# Rowdy forum jeers ALP man as poll issues 'bite'

THE ALP candidate for Nunawading Province, Mr Bob Ives, was jeered and heckled at a public forum last Wednesday night.

Mr Ives was speaking with Liberal Party candidate Mrs Rosemary Varty and Democrat candidate Mr Michael Nardella at a forum organised by the Nunawading Jaycees.

The forum was designed to give voters a chance to assess the policies of the three candidates who stood at the March 2 Nunawading Province election.

Mr Ives said he would direct his speech to the swinging or uncommitted voters in the audience. But as the night wore on there didn't appear to be too many there.

During his speech, Mr Ives was repeatedly interrupted by interjections from the predominantly Liberal audience.

The interjections became louder when Mr Ives and the other two candidates had to answer written questions from the audience.

Mr Ives apologised because he could not raise his voice due to a bout of the flu — and was promptly shouted down by hecklers.

He said it was not his fault the facilities in the hall were not adequate.

By BRIAN WALSH

And once again he was heckled.

After the forum, which ran for about two hours, Mr Ives said he was not surprised by the reaction.

"In 20 years of these types of meetings I have never yet seen one with a predominance of uncommitted voters because quite obviously the party stormtroopers come along," Mr Ives said.

"They do tend to be meetings for the committed, the partisan, and I doubt if one vote is influenced. But still it is important in terms of the democratic process that even if such functions are not taken advantage of, they are held.

Mr Ives believed that the ALP was ahead in the re-election race.

"We think we are in front and we think our organisation is superior.

"We also think that the John Cain versus Jeff Kennett issue is biting hard."

Mr Ives said the "sheer ferocity" of the interruptions to him at the forum reflected the fact that the campaign was beginning to bite.

Mrs Varty was given a rousing reception while Mr Nardella's comments to the forum were heard without reaction.