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Lidia Thorpe a no-show for third of sittings

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Lidia Thorpe was absent more than a third of parliamentary sitting days and voted in just 45 per cent of divisions this year, new data has revealed, as Peter Dutton criticises Labor for being unprepared when the independent senator made a [profane protest to King Charles](#).

Senator Thorpe said she had been “pushed to disclose” she sustained a serious spinal injury from an assault at the MCG earlier this year, after The Australian asked her about her sporadic attendance in parliament since leaving the Greens. While Senator Thorpe attended 28 of 44 sitting days and voted in 222 of 493 divisions so far this year, her participation was poorer last year when she was present for 38 of 66 sitting days (58 per cent) and voted in 206 of 558 divisions (37 per cent).

She said the Australian Federal Police advised her to stay home for periods of last year because of “serious far-right threats against me”. “Delays to the security review and plan from parliament and the AFP meant I wasn’t able to safely travel to parliament for several months,” Senator Thorpe said.

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She said her low attendance this year was because of health issues resulting from an assault. “Earlier this year I was assaulted at the MCG. I sustained serious nerve and spinal injuries in my neck, which required spinal surgery and a plate to be inserted in the back of my neck,” she said.

“There’s a scar on the front of my neck from this. I was ordered by the doctor not to travel and could not attend parliament. My doctor told me to take time off work. There is currently a police investigation under way.

“It’s unfortunate that I have been pushed to disclose this to defend myself, when I would have preferred to keep this private, but that’s just another day in the colony for you.”

Debate over her attendance record emerged as the Coalition questioned whether Senator Thorpe was [eligible to sit in parliament](#) after her admission she deliberately misspoke her affirmation of allegiance to the queen’s “hairs” rather than “heirs” when she was sworn in.

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As senators consider their options to rebuke the Indigenous senator for her [tirade](#) during which she yelled “You are not our king”, “Give us our land back” and “F.k the colony”, Coalition MPs are pushing ahead with a challenge to the constitutionality of her position.

Opposition Senate leader Simon Birmingham wrote to Senate president Sue Lines on Thursday asking her to resolve the constitutional questions arising from Senator Thorpe’s “deeply concerning” admission about her affirmation and act to deter further “disorderly conduct”. “It is clear that current provisions do not deter such behaviour, and I respectfully ask you to explore ... more effective procedures or standing orders to reduce the risk of disorderly conduct,” he wrote.

Though some senators told The Australian they “get along” with Senator Thorpe and find her “reasonable”, others described her attendance during votes as “sporadic” and expressed frustration at her frequent grandstanding in the chamber.

The Opposition Leader said Senator Thorpe’s rant to the King and Queen Camilla was “predictable”. “The disappointing thing was that the government wasn’t prepared for it,” Mr Dutton said.

“It was obvious she was going to make some sort of scene. And the fact that the government took so long to react to it, surely it would have been planned for.”

Mr Dutton accused Anthony Albanese of failing to adequately condemn Senator Thorpe’s actions because she provided a crucial vote for Labor. “These Greens might have a green shopfront, but you walk in through the front door and it’s just a hotbed of madness and crazy ideas. And Lidia Thorpe’s on the extreme end of that,” he said.

Government Senate leader Penny Wong said Senator Thorpe should “reflect on the institution of which she is a part, and how she wishes to play her role”.

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