

Transcript of ABC Interview

START: [00:00]

1 **J Pesutto:** It was very concerning, Michael, and the reason I've taken this step is
2 because I believe it's important as Victoria's alternative Premier to set out the values I
3 stand for and the values my party stands for. The reason I'm bringing this motion, which
4 will go to the party room hopefully next week, is because Moira Deeming not only attended
5 the protest on the steps of parliament but was actively involved in different ways in the
6 organisation and promotion of this protest at which there were speakers who have [00:30]
7 known links with neo-Nazis and white-supremacists, and I won't have any of it. My party
8 wants to govern because we live in a state where the government is corrupt, incompetent
9 and tired and Victorians will need a new government and I want a government that uh –
10 provide a government that will focus on the needs of Victorians, and these values that we
11 saw displayed on the steps of parliament are not consistent with the values I and the Liberal
12 Party stand for.

13 **M Rowland:** How confident are you you'll get the support on Friday within your party
14 room to kick Moira Deeming [01:00] out?

15 **J Pesutto:** Well, I'm not sure it will go there on Friday. We need to observe some
16 notice provisions in the Constitution of the Parliamentary Party, but I am confident because
17 I believe in the Liberal Party, I've been a member of the Liberal Party for 30 years, the
18 values that I possess and the values that the party stands for like free enterprise, free
19 speech, uh the rule of law, uh support for communities and families, are all rights we stand
20 for, but we don't stand with [01:30] neo-Nazis, we don't stand with white- supremacists.
21 And I want to make that clear to all of our viewers that the team I lead will be focused on
22 them and Victorians more generally.

23 **M Rowland:** Would you like to see Moira Deeming kicked out from the broader Liberal
24 Party as well as the Parliamentary wing?

25 **J Pesutto:** Well, I'm going to focus, Michael, on the vote of the Parliamentary Party
26 uh next week. There will be then a discussion presumably in the broader party. That's not
27 for me to determine, [02:00] because – I am one member of the –

28 **M Rowland:** – But you are the leader though, John Pesutto. You are the leader of the
29 Victorian Liberal Party –

30 **J Pesutto:** – Yeah. Yeah, and –

31 **M Rowland:** – do you have a view on whether this woman whose views you hold – you
32 find abhorrent, or her appearance at the rally yesterday abhorrent, kicked out from the
33 Liberal Party you lead?

34 **J Pesutto:** Uh, Michael, I think all of our viewers are very reasonable and sensible
35 and they will understand that by me moving this motion for the reasons I have outlined,
36 that there are certain unmistakable presumptions that they can draw about what I want
37 **[02:30]** to happen in the broader party. The party I lead is a party that's there for all
38 Victorians, we are inclusive, we want to engage with everybody, and I promise everybody
39 watching that the party I lead can be a voice for all of you, for all Victorians. And what I'm
40 doing is a statement that we will not tolerate or ever accept any association with neo-Nazis
41 and white-supremacists or anybody who sympathises with them.

[03:00]

42 **M Rowland:** Didn't the Liberal Party pretty much know, John Pesutto, what it was
43 getting when Moira Deeming was pre-selected? She holds some pretty, as you'd well
44 know, out-there views. She is against not just vaccine mandates, she's against Covid
45 vaccines full stop. So, wasn't there – shouldn't it have been a bit – a bit of a case "of buyer
46 beware" for the Liberal Party before they pre-selected Moira Deeming in the first place?

47 **J Pesutto:** Well, look Michael, can I make a broader point, that I think it is important
48 for me to emphasise? I support free speech and **[03:30]** there are people who have
49 different views, and what I've always said, on the ABC and everywhere else for that matter,
50 is that debates should always be civil, uh courteous, robust, sure, but the debates must be
51 respectful. Now, the reason I'm taking this step is because Nazis and white-supremacists
52 don't make debates respectful and civil, that's the first thing I would say. The other thing I
53 would say, Michael, is that whilst I'd like to think I am a man of enormous talent I can't
54 change the past. **[04:00]** And I'm dealing with things fourteen weeks into my leadership to
55 show Victorians that every step that I have taken since becoming leader in December, that
56 I am determined to be the best possible alternative government that Victorians are crying
57 out for. And that's why I am taking this step.

58 **M Rowland:** And finally, John Pesutto, calls now for the Victorian Government to move
59 to ban, outlaw, the Nazi salute. Would the Liberal Party support that if it were to happen?

60 **J Pesutto:** Yeah, we're very open to this. We'll work with the government very
61 constructively, as we have in the past, as with the banning **[04:30]** of the swastika. We'll
62 continue to work constructively. I want to make it clear we support free speech but every
63 sensible and reasonable person will know, that there have to be some limits on free

64 speech. And people who engage in actions and gestures which incite hate and violence
65 will never be acceptable in our state.

END: **[04:52]**