



## Victorian politics

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# 'My number one issue': Victoria Liberal candidate has history of attacking transgender rights

**Videos show Moira Deeming casting doubt on Covid vaccines and claiming schools encourage LGBTQ+ students to be 'narcissistic'**

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Newly preselected Victorian Liberal candidate Moira Deeming once claimed schools were actively trying to change children's gender and sexual identity, while encouraging gay and transgender students to be "really narcissistic".

In interviews posted on YouTube, the teacher and Melton councillor describes transgender laws as "my number one issue", casts doubt on Covid-19 vaccines and claims LGBTQ+ students get "all the attention" at school.

Deeming was [endorsed on Saturday](#) to replace outspoken Victorian upper house MP Bernie Finn ahead of the November state election. Finn was recently [booted from](#)

the parliamentary Liberal party after he called for abortion to be banned, even for rape survivors.

In a September 2020 interview, Deeming describes those behind Victoria's Safe Schools program - introduced in 2010 to provide training for teachers to support LGBTQ+ students - as "pedophilia apologists" and said she "would rather lose [her] job than teach" the resources.

The program is not part of the curriculum and schools are free to use as many or as few of the resources offered.

"Every single resource in schools is trying to change a child's gender and sexual identity to explore and push away from heterosexuality and just aligning with the biological sex," Deeming said, before criticising other initiatives aimed at celebrating LGBTQ+ identity.

"Very clearly you get all the attention, you get parades, you get a day where you get to wear casual clothes. Everyone celebrates you for doing nothing at all, just for being trans or being gay. No one else gets a parade day at school," she said.

"I was reading all the things you've got to do for the trans kids and the homosexual kids and I thought you're actually teaching them to be really narcissistic."

Deeming also said she was "very disappointed" in changes to the law in Victoria, which allow transgender people to change the sex on their birth certificate without having to undergo reassignment surgery, as well as the recent ban on conversion practice.

Her comments sparked a furious rebuke from Victoria's education minister, Natalie Hutchins, who told Guardian Australia: "This is low.

"Why did Matthew Guy bother getting rid of Bernie Finn?" she said.

"Anyone who thinks young trans Victorians attempting to take their own lives at a rate 15 times higher than other young people is 'narcissism' isn't fit to represent them in parliament."

In the same interview, Deeming describes her disappointment in Victorian Liberals, who she claims have "dropped the ball completely" on transgender issues.

"I'm a member of a political party over here and we have internal voting, and always I mention it, it's my number one issue. If they want my vote, I want to know what they think about transgender laws and the erasure of women and the destruction of women's rights ... and about transgender medicalisation of children," she said.

“One guy said to me, ‘I don’t understand, I’ve never heard of this issue. Can you tell me what it is?’ Immediately I thought, ‘Well, you lost my vote, you idiot. How can you not know about this massive issue?’”

In an interview from September 2021, during Victoria’s sixth lockdown, Deeming casts doubt on Covid-19 vaccines.

“I don’t think it’s gone through the same processes as other vaccines and I think that it’s legitimate for people to wait,” she said.

She also questions why the government “got rid of the opportunity to try Ivermectin and HCQ [hydroxychloroquine]”. Both medications have been found to be ineffective in the treatment of Covid-19.

Deeming’s preselection has been met with criticism from the Labor government – with the health minister quick to point out she has called for the repeal of Australia’s abortion laws, describing them as “terrible”.

Privately, Liberal MPs have also expressed concern Deeming’s views could stoke a culture war at a time when the party is seeking to present as more progressive.

One likened her views to Katherine Deves, the party’s federal candidate for Warringah, who became a lightning rod for criticism over her comments about transgender people.

Deeming took to Twitter to throw her support behind Deves during the campaign, using the hashtag #IStandWithKatherineDeves.

Ghassan Kassisieh, legal director at Equality Australia, said support services for the LGBTIQ+ community saw a “massive increase” in requests for help during the campaign.

“Our communities’ mental health is in crisis, and we’re simply asking that politicians stop using our lives as political footballs, regardless of which side of politics you’re on,” he said.

Victoria’s opposition leader, Matthew Guy, on Sunday defended Deeming’s right to her own views.

“She’s expressed her views, as far as I can see, in a fairly respectful way and she’s entitled to have a different point of view from a lot of people,” he said on Sunday.

Last year, the party’s equality spokesman, James Newbury, gave an “iron-clad guarantee” it will not amend new laws banning gay conversion therapy, telling the Age he was “absolutely” committed to supporting the LGBTIQ+ community.

Meanwhile, Finn [told 3AW on Monday he was “absolutely delighted” Deeming was chosen as his replacement](#), describing her as a “good friend”. The duo are both part of anti-abortion group March for Babies.

Deeming’s endorsement will go before a party administration committee, but it is expected the preselection will be formalised.

Guardian Australia contacted Deeming for comment.

*In Australia, the national counselling and referral service for LGBTIQ+ people, [QLife](#), is 1800 184 527. The crisis support service Lifeline is 13 11 14. In the US, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is 1-800-273-8255. In the UK, Samaritans can be contacted on 116 123. Other international suicide helplines can be found at [befrienders.org](#)*

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