

# Exiled MP Moira Deeming tells Opposition Leader John Pesutto she is taking legal action over her suspension

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State and Territory Government

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Exiled Liberal MP Moira Deeming has told Victorian Opposition Leader John Pesutto she will take legal action over her suspension.

Ms Deeming, who was [suspended from the party room for nine months](#) over her involvement with an anti-trans rights rally organised by activists Mr Pesutto alleged were associated with neo-Nazis, has said she wants the vote that resulted in her suspension recast.

Earlier on Thursday, she issued an email of demand that said she wanted a media statement from Mr Pesutto by 2pm or he would face legal action.

She claimed that when she was suspended, it was agreed that Mr Pesutto would make a statement to "exonerate" her from "false

## Key points:

- Anonymous Liberal MPs claim leader John Pesutto bullied a rookie MP in a party room meeting
- Controversial MP Moira Deeming has threatened to sue Mr Pesutto over comments he made

allegations" regarding the rally's association with Nazis.

The email also focused on the terms of the MP's return to the party room after the suspension period, as well as a dossier released by Mr Pesutto about Ms Deeming prior to her suspension.

"Given that the leadership did not make the statement of exoneration, or confirm my return, and that no mediation or even any minutes exist to settle this dispute, I have advised my lawyers to prepare a legal challenge over my suspension, because I believe we need to come together as colleagues and have a do-over meeting," she wrote.

The Opposition Leader earlier rebuffed the threat of legal action

"I can say categorically that the exoneration that Moira has sought in the email this morning ... will not be happening. What was in the motion stands," he said.

"Nothing in the dossier ever accused Moira Deeming of being a Nazi or herself having Nazi sympathies."

Senior Liberal MPs have already begun discussing if Ms Deeming should now be expelled from the party room over her legal action.

about her presence at an anti-trans rights rally

- Supporters of Mr Pesutto have demanded "terrorist" MPs stop undermining the Liberal leader



Moira Deeming (left) says she will challenge her suspension from the party room. (YouTube)

## Former leaders among those backing Mr Pesutto

Earlier, Mr Pesutto's allies rallied behind him after allegations from unnamed sources, published in the Herald Sun, that he bullied rookie MP Renee Heath over taking party room minutes from the meeting in March that suspended Ms Deeming.

It was alleged Ms Heath had been reduced to tears, and she later sent an email to all MPs complaining about her treatment. Ms Heath has been contacted for comment.

"There are three or four terrorists who care more about blowing up the Liberal Party than they do Daniel Andrews," frontbencher James Newbury said.

"They are holding the Liberal Party hostage, they need to work out whether they're Liberals or whether they want to sit on the crossbench.

"Everybody has had enough — they need to do the right thing by the Liberal party room, by Liberal voters, and Victorians."

MPs are white hot with rage at what they say is the constant undermining and disunity that has plagued the state parliamentary team, especially during a period where the government's budget is a mess and the Premier faces questions over integrity.

"Having been opposition leader, it's a tough job. I think John Pesutto has displayed the patience of a saint," Shadow Attorney-General Michael O'Brien said.

Former leader Matthew Guy also backed Mr Pesutto.

"There's a couple of terrorists within the parliamentary party who need to work out whether they want to sit with the parliamentary party or not," Mr Guy said.

"We're not going to allow John Pesutto to be attacked."



Victorian Liberal leader John Pesutto responds to allegations of bullying within the party room.



Former Opposition Leader Matthew Guy has attacked "terrorists" he says are undermining his successor, John Pesutto. (AAP: Joel Carrett)

South-West Coast MP Roma Britnell, who was present at the meeting, said she "couldn't believe the reports" she was reading and that "at no time was John discourteous, disrespectful".

Mr Pesutto attempted to refocus on issues dogging the Andrews government at a press conference but it was dominated by the crisis facing his party.

The leader, who has only been in the job since December, defended the use of the term "terrorists", saying it showed the frustration of his colleagues.

"Most people in the party overwhelmingly want the party to be that effective opposition," Mr Pesutto said.

"I think anybody who's talking anonymously in this way, would have to think about why are you here? We've got work to do on behalf of the Victorian people."

One Liberal member outside the party room lamented "anyone that thinks the Liberal Party hasn't got further depths to plumb is kidding themselves".

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