

RE: Herald Sun Oped

From: Rodrigo Pintos-Lopez <[REDACTED]>
To: John Pesutto <john.pesutto@parliament.vic.gov.au>
Cc: Nick Johnston <[REDACTED]>
Date: Wed, 22 Mar 2023 09:12:13 +1100
Attachments: JP Herald Sun Oped RPL edits 22-03-22.docx (20.32 kB)

Thanks Nick. This is excellent. Attached is a markup of my changes.

From: Nick Johnston <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, March 21, 2023 10:59 PM
[REDACTED] to [\[REDACTED\]@parliament.vic.gov.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@parliament.vic.gov.au); [REDACTED]
Subject: Herald Sun Oped

Please see attached the oped from JP I've drafted for the Herald Sun this Friday.

This oped obviously can't be all about Moira. It needs to also be about our vision for the party and the state JP wants to lead.

We need to remember it's a Herald Sun audience and Liberal voters including our MPs will read it so I've written it with them in mind.

Let me know what you think. We need to submit it Thursday morning and have 800 words.

Thanks

Nick Johnston | Director of Communication and Strategy
Office of John Pesutto MP | Leader of the Opposition
Level 1, 157 Spring Street, Melbourne VIC 3000
Mobile: [REDACTED] **Email:** Nick.Johnston@parliament.vic.gov.au



Office of
John Pesutto MP
Leader of the Opposition
Victorian Liberal Leader

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Next Monday's special meeting of the Victorian Parliamentary Liberal Party is about so much more than just one individual.

It's about a vision of the party I lead here in Victoria and ensuring we strive to represent all Victorians.

The scenes we witnessed on the steps of Parliament last Saturday were an affront to the values we hold dear as Victorians. Nazis have no place in our community and those who share platforms with people who associate with extremist groups, including neo-Nazi activists, have no place in the Liberal Party.

Victorians should not be misled by the narrative put out there of an innocent individual attending a rally gate-crashed by neo-Nazis. This is no more than a stalking horse. It is not about freedom of speech. There are a range of sensible views on that must be heard in relation to issues including women's rights. The Liberal Party is a broad church and we respect everyone's right to express a view.

But with all rights comes responsibilities. We must draw a line at hate speech, discrimination and violence.

That's why I've acted. Regardless of religious faith, race, sexual preference and identity, Victorians everywhere need to know that the Liberal Party is inclusive and can be a voice for them.

No matter who we are or where we come from, we all share the abiding bond of humanity. Unlike the Premier, who thrives on dividing people, I want to bring people together. I want to lead a modern Liberal Party that is mainstream, a Party that embraces diversity, not one that drives division.

We need to be an effective opposition to the Andrews Labor government, which is tired, corrupt and incompetent. A strong democracy demands nothing less. The rest is just a distraction.

In the midst of a cost-of-living crisis, Victorian families and small businesses are struggling to pay the bills and are being belted by a government that has introduced no fewer than 44 new or increased taxes since it came to office.

A Labor government that continues to drive up power bills and has no plan to guarantee our future energy supplies. A government that is on its way to accruing a \$7.4 billion in debt that will leave all of us paying \$20 million a day in interest alone.

Every dollar spent paying off our debt is a dollar not spent on essential community services like schools and hospitals. This is money that needs to be urgently spent because of the government's failings in our health and education systems.

A Labor government with a culture of waste that has seen it rack up a staggering \$30 billion in cost overruns on major projects since it was elected nearly a decade ago thanks to its economic mismanagement.

A government dealing with a fiscal crisis led by a premier already warning Victorians to expect the worst when it brings down its budget in May. That expects job losses, higher taxes and charges and a further reduction in services.

A government mired in corruption led by a contemptuous premier who will do anything to silence and punish those who dare to question him. Who brazenly says he does not read letters from the corruption Commissioner.

We need to focus on holding the government to account on these issues and many other vital issues to all Victorians. It's too important.

With my fellow Liberals and Nationals, I want to present a vision for a better and bolder Victoria. I want Victoria to be the best State in Australia. A State with the best health and education systems, the best economy and jobs and the best place to live, learn, work and raise a family.

A State that prides itself on its integrity and decency. That is focused on people rather than politics. A government focused on solutions instead of spin. A government that governs for all Victorians and not just those who voted for them.

I want my team to build a great legacy for our State and to be proud of the contribution they can make to people's lives. A State where a person can pursue their own economic interests without undue interference from the government. With policies that reduce taxes and regulations on businesses and individuals, because, I believe, this will lead to greater economic growth and prosperity for all. Modern Liberals also believe in equality and freedom from hate.

We need to reflect the values of our many diverse communities. To be inclusive and welcoming to everyone regardless of who they are, where they come from, what they look like and what they aspire to be.

I love Victoria. It has given me, the son of Italian parents who grew up in the Latrobe Valley, so many opportunities. I also love the Liberal Party and I'm desperate for it to win because I want to make Victoria the State we know it can be.