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New Liberal MP uses first speech to slam equality 'taken to extremes'

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Victoria's new upper house Liberal MP for the western suburbs used her inaugural speech on Tuesday to slam left-wing school curriculums, decry the decriminalisation of sex work and take aim at the state government's approach to gender-diverse young people.

In a wide-ranging speech, Moira Deeming, a former teacher and Melton councillor, denounced ideals of unity and equality "taken to extremes".



Victorian upper house Liberal MP Moira Deeming during her inaugural speech. JOE ARMAO

Deeming, who was [chosen by the Liberal Party](#) to top its ticket in the Western Metropolitan Region at last year's state election, slammed what she described as left-wing educational curriculums.

"The final straw which compelled me to challenge the government head on was discovering that school policies and curriculums had been radically altered," she said.

"Instead of being inspired by history's heroes, students were being chastised and even told to stand up in class and apologise for historical crimes they had neither committed nor condoned.

"They were told that the physical world is on the brink of doom."

Deeming filled the vacancy created when former upper house MP Bernie Finn [was expelled](#) from the Liberal Party after saying that abortion should be banned in Victoria, even for rape survivors. Finn unsuccessfully contested the November election for the Democratic Labour Party.

Her first speech to state parliament also took aim at moves to further decriminalise sex work in Victoria.

"This government has made it legal to have children inside brothels in Victoria," she said.

Deeming said that in commercial brothels "human newborn babies and children up to 18 months of age are allowed on the premises".

The Liberal MP added: "In homebase brothels, children of any age are allowed inside."

Both the 1994 and 2022 sex work acts allow children under 18 months at licensed commercial brothels. The sex industry says this is so single mothers working at commercial brothels can breastfeed between shifts and show off their newborns to work colleagues without fear of prosecution.

The 2022 act includes an exemption for children over 18 months if an adult is conducting sex work at a location that is primarily a place of residence. Industry groups say this is so parents who occasionally perform sex work from home are not thrown in jail. The 2022 act does not call such places of residence brothels.

Former Reason Party leader Fiona Patten, who has long campaigned for sex work reforms, accused Deeming of being loose with the truth.

"I can't imagine the regulations around this changing," she said of exemptions for children at licensed commercial brothels.

"So unless Ms Deeming has a crystal ball and can see what WorkSafe and other regulatory bodies are planning to implement, she's guessing."

Victoria's Consumer Affairs Minister Danny Pearson, who oversees policy on sex work, has been contacted for comment.

Deeming also criticised recent changes to Victorian law to [outlaw gay conversion therapy](#) and allow gender transition in children.

And in a nod to Melbourne's COVID-19 mandates and restrictions, she added: "I believe in ... the freedom to travel outside my suburb. And the freedom to accept or refuse medical treatment."

Deeming said her former job as a teacher transformed her from “good Catholic Labor stock” into someone who is a social and economic conservative.

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CLARIFICATION — This story has been updated with further information about Victoria's sex work legislation and additional context for Moira Deeming and Fiona Patten's respective arguments.



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