

Victorian Liberals defend pre-selection of controversial candidate Moira Deeming

By state political reporter [Leanne Wong](#) and [Georgia Lenton-Williams](#)

State and Territory Government

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The Victorian Liberal Party has again defended its pre-selection of a controversial anti-abortion candidate after a former Liberal MP quit the party over the decision.

Moira Deeming was chosen last week to replace outspoken MP Bernie Finn and contest the upper house Western Metropolitan Region seat at the November state election.

Ms Deeming, a City of Melton councillor, has previously pushed for separate bathrooms for transgender people.

She has also vocally opposed COVID-19 mandates on social media and accused Premier Daniel Andrews of having "trampled on" the rights of Victorians during the pandemic.

Key points:

- Moira Deeming was selected to replace MP Bernie Finn, who was expelled from the Victorian Liberal Party
- Former MP Andrew Elsbury quit the party on Wednesday, saying his

A former Liberal MP for the western metropolitan district, Andrew Elsbury, quit the party on Wednesday.

He said his views no longer aligned with the party.

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- Opposition Leader Matthew Guy says he is not concerned by Ms Deeming's past comments



Moira Deeming was chosen last week to replace outspoken MP Bernie Finn. *(Supplied: City of Melton)*

Opposition leader Matthew Guy on Friday said he was not concerned by comments Ms Deeming made prior to her state pre-selection.

"I'm not interested in comments she's made in the past. I'm interested in what she's doing as a candidate," he said.

"She's a councillor in the west, [who has] done a lot of work on strategic planning in Melton so I'm focused on the future, and I'm focused on making sure the west is well-represented."

Ms Deeming as recently as March moved motions at council which related to single-sex bathrooms.

She told a council meeting last year: "It is not discrimination to deny males of any gender identity to those services and spaces designed exclusively for the female sex such as toilets and change rooms."

Mr Guy was speaking at an announcement about an election promise for a new stadium in the western metropolitan region, and dismissed questions about Ms Deeming's absence.

"I've had other functions where we've had media events and I haven't had Upper House candidates with me," he said.

"There's no conspiracy theory, I'm not hiding UFOs in the basement."

Earlier this year, Ms Deeming was overlooked by the Liberal Party's administration committee for pre-selection for the federal seat of Gordon, over concerns her views might be a distraction for former prime minister Scott Morrison's election campaign.

One former Liberal staffer on Friday told the ABC Ms Deeming's comments were akin to those made by former federal Liberal candidate for Warringah, Katherine Deves.

The staffer described the pre-selection of Ms Deeming in Victoria as "Katherine Deves 2.0."

State government condemns pre-selection



Danny Pearson, Minister for Housing and State Member for Essendon in Melbourne's west, says transphobic comments are unacceptable. (ABC News)

Minister for Housing Danny Pearson said the Opposition Leader missed an opportunity call out Ms Deeming's remarks.

"He [Mr Guy] chose to stay silent when his candidate has made some appalling comments that are deeply transphobic and against the rights of women," he said.

"Trans kids are 15 times more likely to attempt suicide in Victoria... Can't he see these comments cause an enormous amount of distress to the trans community and their loved ones?"

If you or anyone you know needs help:

- [Lifeline](#) on 13 11 14
- [Kids Helpline](#) on 1800 551 800
- [MensLine Australia](#) on 1300 789 978
- [Suicide Call Back Service](#) on 1300 659 467
- [Beyond Blue](#) on 1300 224 636 or its COVID-19 support service 1800 512 348
- [Headspace](#) on 1800 650 890

He questioned why the party would remove Mr Finn to replace him with Ms Deeming.

Mr Finn, who has been an MP for nearly four decades, was expelled from the Liberal Party in May after posting inflammatory social media content about abortion rights.

Advocate says comments 'still resonate' with LGBTIQ+ community

Spokesperson for advocacy organisation

Rainbow Families Victoria, Felicity Marlowe, said Matthew Guy's response was disappointing.

"LGBTIQ+ people and our rainbow families and our children live, work and study in every area of Victoria," Ms Marlowe said.

- [ReachOut](https://au.reachout.com) at au.reachout.com
 - [Care Leavers Australasia Network \(CLAN\)](https://www.careleaversaustralia.org.au/) on 1800 008 774
 - [Brother to Brother](https://www.brother.to) on 1800 435 799
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Felicity Marlowe says everyone thinks about who they vote for based on their values. (ABC News)

"Whether comments are made last year or the year before ... they will still resonate with someone," she said.

Ms Marlowe said public debates about LGBTIQ+ people and their families have detrimental impacts on their mental health and wellbeing.

She called on the Liberal Party to think about the impact of their communication and policies.

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