
From: Renee Heath
Sent: Monday, March 27, 2023 3:59 PM
To: John Pesutto <John.Pesutto@parliament.vic.gov.au>
Subject: Minutes

John, please find attached the notes I took. I have not proofed them ye. Renee

Attendance:

1. Anne Marie
2. Wendy
3. Wayne
4. Ryan
5. James
6. Bridget
7. Matt
8. Bill
9. Brad
10. Chris
11. Nick
12. Brad R
13. Michael O
14. Roma
15. Richard
16. Bev
17. Moira
18. Kim
19. Matt
20. Georgie
21. Trung
22. Joe
23. Cindy
24. Evan
25. Jess
26. Sam
27. David Southwick
28. John
29. David Hodgett
30. Renee Heath
31. David Davis

Meeting opened at 10am

JP: thanked everyone for coming. House keeping: motion was emailed last Monday and everyone has had a chance to consider it.

JP proposed a secret ballot. Three scrutineers. One for John, one for Moira and a third as witness.

Everyone is present. It will need 16 votes to pass

John: I won't read the motions. You all have that. Its been a difficult week. I can only assure you as I did last Tuesday that I would never have brought this forward unless I had to. I would never would have put my leadership to this type of test unless I absolutely had to do it. It we are to be a winning force, then we have to be true to what we have been telling ourselves we are going to do. We need to be professional and focused. We need Victoria to see we are reliable, focused. Unless we take this step we are proposing today, we cannot do that. Its only been a short time since I have got the pleasure of leading and we have started to make gains. Every time we get a run and start landing blows we get drawn away from it and that is serious. It leads to brand damage. I want to assure you that I do firmly believe that there is space in the liberal party for a whole range of views. We have to have in mind that its not just our colleagues but the state that has entrusted us to leading. There is room in our house for a brand range of views. The decision that I am asking you to take today and a collective is leadership. This is a tough decision, there is nothing personal in it.

We have issues that we need to prosecute. Cost of living. Energy prices. If we cant do this I wonder if we are up to what is required. I was at pains to work through the issues as I did last weekend. I know what sacrifices you made. This pathway is to make sure your sacrifices are worth it. The leadership I'm offering is one that says I want to win.

This is the first of many tough decisions we are going to have to make if we want to win.

He spoke for 10 minutes.

Richard: On Tuesday I along with others believed that there was a third option in dealing with this. We have all been put in this room with the same position. Expulsion is a very last result. Spoke to the constitution and notice of motion. Even the ABC cannot prove the allegations of neo nazi sympathies. We are not here to disagree with our leader. The motion raises two issues: neo nazi sympathies and hate against trans. Neither have been able to be proven. We cannot kick her out on two unjustifiable lies. Moiras legal case against us is massively strong. If we are going to get rid of a strong, young woman that has joined our rank, I am devastated at the consequences of this motion.

Bev: needless to say I would urge everyone not to support. This is one of the hardest day of my life. This is the most devastating day of my life. I lost my son, and if this wasn't something extremely important, I would be on a plane on the way to Scotland to attend the funeral of my late sons god father. I will always stand for womens rights. If I hadn't been in Sydney at a womens conference, I would have been there with moira fighting for the rights of women. I am here for womens and young girls so they are safe. We have to stand up for women. We had a chance to stand for women when men in black came and hijacked a womens rally. This is not about your leadership john. You have set out to expel a woman in this party. We have received a flurry of emails. People have emailed in, there have been flurries of emails to support Moira. We look stupid. If we are to be a party that embraces all view, then we have to be sure that we advocate for the views of 50% OF THE population. A lot of moiras supporters are lesbians and they are the ones that are getting attacked. If we spent out energy fighting ideas, not personalities we will be a winning force. We are all entitled to a different opinion and we are entitled to voice it. Please do not make us go down the path of socialist.

Brad B: john, you said some things about leadership. We all need to move forward. This should not have been. I went out of my way to talk to the police crew that were involved in this process. Vic police knew one of the men in

that group. He is a known nazi. They have a big restriction in that we can do. There was no nazi symbols. Laws did not allow them to move them on. The most violent group was a trans group. The next day the vic pol were taken aside by the glow, we need the full details of that process. There is an opportunity to come up with another option.

We need to come together and know what the standards are. I have been here 12 years and I have never had those conversations. It has to be a line in the sand.

Georgie: as I said on Tuesday nobody wants this. Not one of us wants to be in this room today but we are because of a scenario that has arisen.

Over the past few weeks there has been some things about some things that Moira has said. Everyone knows that moira has stood for things for many, many years. She has a public profile. When she made her maiden speech there were some issues and John and I spoke to her. We came into this party room as equals. We spoke about the sensitives around these issues. We tried to provide around the issues that were raised to give advice. You might have been an activist before you were in parliament but now you're an MP. We are all MP's surely we should understand basic standards.

I didn't hear the women's speech, I understand it was about the rally. Then the rally happened. You knew what you were walking into. David reached out and said we need to deal with this and there was no nothing – defiance again. There was no understanding about what needs to be done. This isn't about a women's issue, it's not about freedom of speech, this is a pattern. There is a pattern of defiance and no advice. I am sorry about that moira because I have come to you and wanted to help you and nothing. This is about leadership. I urge you to support this motion.

Ryan: in response to Georgie's commentary. It's not about those things. It's about the two things right here (held up motion paper). The reasons that Georgie raised are not here. All of these issues that are being put forward, are not on the motion. Georgie signed this and she hasn't put any of this on the motion. There are 2 issues – if you believe in them, support the motion.

David Davis: that is a little bit simplistic Ryan. It's in Georgie's rights to put forward these points. There is motion there but there is also a context.

Kim: I won't know whether I'm sad or angry to have got to this point. After the last loss I thought we were taking a new direction. Instead of shooting ourselves in the foot – we are shooting ourselves in the head. We don't respect everyone's views. I thought that's what the liberal party was all about. I cannot believe how badly this has been handled John

Chris: read from his notes. The neo nazis were not invited and were not welcome. I oppose neonazies. We must push against against guilt by association. This could happen to any of us. This will make members being afraid to stand for what they believe in. Any of us could be Moira one day. Federally – we always got behind each other when things came up. Discipline if needed can be done in different ways. To be told after, is not fair. This will only further divide our party. I encourage the colleagues to

Joe: I love the liberal but hate this situation. I hate it beyond belief. When I had my maiden speech, there was a lot of people who supported me, they supported me and they reached out. Moira came up to me and looked me square in the eyes and said "Joe, I am proud of you". They are not the words of someone who hates gays or lesbians. I saw Moira for who she was. I am put in an impossible situation because I am made to choose between two people I

respect. Whichever way this vote goes, its going to be crap. I don't even want to walk out there. ,We need to find an option that saves face for John, but saves Moira.

Renee Spoke

Matt Bach: I have found this so incredible hard. I found last weekend that this is a necessary step. We cannot be wedding to extremists. I urge you to support the motion.

Nick: I share Kims initial feelings. I cannot understand what we are doing as human beings to be quite honest. I read the motion, I do not agree for a minute that Moira is a neo nazi. We will all make mistakes. If the motion is successful today you are actually labelling someone a nazi. Moira is going to have to live with that. Its like calling someone a murderer, a rapist or a paedophile. Substance is key because there is not a penalty that is worse than this. Most peoples minds are probably made up and that is the saddest thing. You have to maintain an open mind right until the end. If moira had been told that she couldn't go to the rally and she did, I might be able to support this motion – but that didn't happen.

David Hodgett: sadly this issue has become a vote for, or for the other when the majority in the room probably want both. I spent quite a bit of time with Moira this week and I am sure she would do things differently if we had our time again, and so would the leadership. A lot of us are pissed off that we are placed in this position where we have to choose one or the others. I cannot believe that the 31 of us in this room cannot find a sensible way forward. I urge that we find a sensible way forward. Some of the behaviour of one way was absolutely appalling.

David Southwick: I was unsure whether I should speak, because I know when I speak people say to me that im too close to it. I want to thank Chris and Renee for the calling those men for what they were, which is neo nazis. I don't think Moira is a nazi. I haven't said that I will not say that. She is not in any way but we are members of parliament. When something is wrong, we need to do what is needed to be able to fix it. I don't accept that sitting on the couch talking about conspiracy theories is calling that out. If the nazis hadn't showed up, we wouldn't be in this room. Couch conversation, having champaign and talking about conspiracy theories is calling it out. It is not acceptable to change you profile picture to have a barbie doll dressed as a nazi as a profile picture. I took John on Sunday to the holocaust centre. We didn't make it a media thing – Joe a 92 holocaust and said "please don't allow this to happen again".

What should have happened on that couch is "there were nazis that crashed a rally". Those nazi wont coming after jews, they were coming after trans.

Its not about Jews. Its about anyone who is not them. We are members who need to call it out.

John: the problem is we could not get a concession from moira.

Ryan asked "so there is no room for compromise in this room?"

JP: "not at this stage, no"

Moira: the email that I wrote to you all, outlined what my experience was on Saturday. I emailed you a letter from my lawyer addressing the dossier. I immediately apologised. Moira will provide a copy of her speech

Meeting suspended from 11:33 until 11:40

11:56am. Meeting called to order. We have reached a compromise. People have been moved

The promised compromised –

- moira to be suspended from the party room for 9 months
- a joint statement
- a media statement this statement will make clear that no one was accusing Moira of being a Nazi, or Nazi sympathiser.

Effective: 9 months from this meeting.

Motion:

- nine months suspension immediately
- joint statement from the leaders office in conjunction with Moira
- we will release a statement that she is not a Nazi

Agreed but not with a show of hands.