

NOTICE OF FILING

Details of Filing

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A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Sia Lagos'.

Registrar

Important Information

This Notice has been inserted as the first page of the document which has been accepted for electronic filing. It is now taken to be part of that document for the purposes of the proceeding in the Court and contains important information for all parties to that proceeding. It must be included in the document served on each of those parties.

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Form 59
Rule 29.02(1)

Affidavit of Naomi Walton

VID 1023 of 2023

Federal Court of Australia
District Registry: Victoria
Division: General

MOIRA DEEMING

Applicant

JOHN PESUTTO

Respondent

Affidavit of: **Naomi Walton**

Address: [REDACTED]

Occupation: Paramedic

Date: 26 May 2024

I, Naomi Walton of [REDACTED], say on oath:

1. I am a Paramedic with Ambulance Victoria. In July this year, I will have been with Ambulance Victoria for 20 years.
2. Prior to that, I was a Registered Nurse at Western Health Footscray Hospital for 6 and a half years from about 1998-2004.
3. I met Moira through church, in about 2009. At the time, we were both attending Brimbank Presbyterian Church, in Taylors Lakes (**Brimbank**). We have since become very close friends.

Moira's Reputation (Prior to 19 March 2023)

Filed on behalf of (name & role of party)	Moira Deeming, Applicant
Prepared by (name of person/lawyer)	Patrick George, Solicitor
Law firm (if applicable)	Giles George
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[Version 3 form approved 02/05/2019]

Naomi Walton

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4. Upon meeting Moira, I immediately thought she was an incredibly caring and intelligent person. We regularly have very open discussions with each other about our own failures and we laugh about them together.
5. Prior to 19 March 2023, she was known in my circles for having a great sense of humour and could always joke about herself and as being humble and non-judgmental of others. It is a well-accepted creed within the Presbyterian Church that no one is perfect but God. Moira has sincerely embraced this ethos and has always refrained from judging others for their imperfections. She was very forgiving and always showed people grace. Whilst she and her family attended Brimbank, I would see her weekly at church services. My family and I stopped attending church at Brimbank in about 2014, to attend Point Cook Presbyterian Church as it was closer to where we lived. From then onwards, I would see Moira every few months, but we were regularly in contact via telephone and text message.
6. Within the Brimbank community, before 19 March 2023, amongst the people with whom I mixed, Moira had a reputation as being very kind, caring, friendly and engaging. She was known amongst these people for her humility, intelligence and wit and as a good listener who would encourage others during difficult times. Everyone at church I knew was very comfortable with her. I observed that she always made sure that everyone who attended Brimbank, whether new or long attending, felt comfortable and welcomed by the community.
7. At the time I met Moira, I had not been attending church for a while because my son was suffering from major health problems. By the time I returned to church, Moira had already established herself as a well-respected and loved member of the Brimbank community. When my family and I returned to attend service, Moira went out of her way to ensure that I was comfortable and felt welcomed. She was someone that everybody at church wanted to know and be around.
8. Whilst Moira is physically a beautiful person, she does not flaunt this. She was humble about her appearance and everyone in our church admired her humility. Members of Brimbank saw how determined and driven she was. They would remark to me that she was deeply committed to her family and community. They looked up to her and often asked her for advice on difficult life decisions. People within Brimbank have told me that they always valued Moira's opinion on these matters, as they knew she would provide a considered and well-thought-out opinion. She would always make herself available for her friends and family and offer guidance wherever possible.
9. In the Presbyterian Community, Moira and her husband, Andrew, had a reputation for displaying exceptional character. Andrew is an elder in the Presbyterian community in Western Melbourne. My husband became an elder in 2008, and through this I have come to understand the process required to become an elder within the Presbyterian church. I

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understand that, to become an elder, you must be nominated and elected by the congregation. Presbyterian elders are responsible for various administrative functions within the church. They assist ministers in preparing services and they hold a place of authority within the church. They are held to a higher standard by the church and congregation. To be elected to that position, one must be of good standing and must be accepted by the community as being a person of exceptional character. As part of determining whether to nominate and then elect Andrew as an elder, the church and the congregation considered his and his family's standing within the community as well as his relationship with Moira and their children. Andrew would not have been appointed nor be accepted by the community as an elder if Moira did not have a reputation as being of exceptional character herself.

The Publications and their Impact on Moira

10. I have been provided with a copy of Mr Pesutto's statements the subject of these proceedings which I am informed are defined in Moira's Statement of Claim as:
- (a) the Media Release;
 - (b) the 3AW Interview;
 - (c) the ABC Interview;
 - (d) the Press Conference; and
 - (e) the Expulsion Motion and Dossier.
- (collectively, the **Publications**)

Damage to reputation

11. Shortly after the Publications, I saw hateful posts about Moira on social media, including on Facebook and X. I recall seeing comments calling Moira a 'bigot', or a 'Nazi' or a 'Nazi sympathiser'. I also recall seeing comments to the effect of "*I am glad the Liberal Party have gotten rid of her*".
12. Whilst attending Point Cook Presbyterian Church, there have been some instances in which I have been asked about the allegations Mr Pesutto has made against Moira. These people did not know Moira personally. I was asked questions to the effect of "*did Moira know that Nazi's would turn up to the rally?*". I would have to defend her.
13. Within the broader Presbyterian community, being called a Nazi is a terrible slur. Nazism is the opposite of what it means to be a Christian. Presbyterians hold the belief that humans are created by God and are equal; no person is superior to another, regardless of gender or race. Within the Presbyterian community, we believe that people should love their neighbour (not hate their neighbour) and that we ought to care for other people as

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we would like to be cared for ourselves. Nazism is wholly inconsistent with these beliefs. A person who genuinely holds Nazi beliefs would not be accepted as a member of the Presbyterian community.

Hurt to feelings

14. Since the Publications, to my observation, Moira has put on a façade in public to make it seem like she is impenetrable and resolute, particularly as an elected Member of Parliament who is expected to continue to represent her local community. However, I know from our private conversations that she has been broken by the Publications. She has told me that she is finding it difficult to continue with her life. She has said that on numerous occasions she has found it difficult even to get out of bed, to get out of the house, to eat and to dress appropriately.
15. As a paramedic, I regularly interact with people who are experiencing difficulties with their mental health. I have observed that Moira has been devastated and deeply affected by the Publications, and the media attention that followed her immediately after the Publications. For example, I noticed that she was not eating much and I could see that she had lost weight. I have noticed she has been far less communicative with me. Although she is contactable, she seems to be withdrawn and reclusive, almost as if she is shell shocked. I have observed her to be a lot more serious, and she does not laugh as much as she used to.
16. She clearly feels like she has had to endure a great injustice. I recall she asked me "*How do I go on.*" It was clear to me that Mr Pesutto's accusations about her had brought her to the brink. It was extremely painful for me to see her like this, and it is quite clear to me that her life has been an ongoing horror since the Publications.
17. Moira told me that she felt like she was being unfairly targeted by Mr Pesutto and that through the making of the allegations against her, and by maintaining that he had acted appropriately in trying to expel her, it felt like Mr Pesutto was trying to destroy her. She said to me that at the time of the Publications it felt like Mr Pesutto wanted her to simply "*walk away*" from the Liberal Party and from politics. Most other people I know would have done so; I know I would not have had the strength to endure the pain that Moira has suffered as a result of the Publications.
18. Moira has told me that because of the extent to which Mr Pesutto has gone to publicly make the allegations against her, it has made her feel like no one wants to hear her side of the story. She was hurt that people were calling the Let Women Speak Rally an 'anti-trans rally' and a 'Nazi rally'. She was especially hurt because the reason that she spoke at the rally was because she wanted to raise awareness for an issue that was close to her heart. She had previously told me that she took it upon herself to do all that she could to

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ensure that young girls do not suffer abuse. Moira told me that she felt like she did not have a choice and that she needed to fight for what she believed in to protect her daughters and other young girls.

- 19. I have observed that Mr Pesutto's allegations have not only affected Moira but her family too. Any time I have visited Moira and her family since the Publications they all sound dejected and flat. This was especially striking as I recall they were previously a very joyful and warm family. It seemed as though they were all preoccupied with the allegations against Moira and were focusing all their energy on clearing her name. Moira has told me that she is not only concerned that her reputation has been damaged by Mr Pesutto's allegations, but that it will also affect her children's reputation long term.
- 20. Moira has told me that since the accusations, she has been less patient than usual with her children and that she has snapped at them on occasions. She has told me that this has been difficult and upsetting for her, particularly because, as a Member of Parliament, she does not see her children as often as she used to. She has told me that she wants to be strong for her children and not let them see that she is hurt.
- 21. Moira has expressed to me that she needed to commence these proceedings to vindicate herself and her family.
- 22. I have known Moira for almost 15 years, and I am frightened that the accusations have broken her and that she will never be the same.

Sworn by the deponent
 at Melbourne
 in Victoria
 on 26 May 2023
 Before me:

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[Handwritten Signature]

Signature of deponent

[Handwritten Signature]

Signature of witness

Sarah GRECH Acting Sergeant

Name and qualification of witness



Altona Police Station
 [Redacted]
 Altona, Victoria 3018
 [Redacted]