

## 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 Anna Hughes

VID 1023 of 2023

Federal Court of Australia  
District Registry: Victoria  
Division: General

### MOIRA DEEMING

Applicant

### JOHN PESUTTO

Respondent

Affidavit of: **Anna Hughes**  
Address: [REDACTED]  
Occupation: Catering Assistant  
Date: 27 May 2024

I, Anna Hughes of [REDACTED], say on oath:

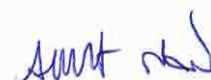
1. I work as a catering assistant and do casual administrative work for Moira. I started working for Moira last year, but I do not recall when.

### Meeting Moira

2. Moira and I attended La Trobe University at the same time in about 2002 or 2003. That is where we first met. Around this time, we also played soccer together with the Northern Pumas (**Soccer Team**). I got to know Moira better in about 2008 through church; we both attended Bundoora Presbyterian Church at the time.
3. The frequency of our interactions with each other have gone up and down over the years due to work and our respective child commitments. In recent years, we have seen each other socially about 3 or 4 times a year, but we also keep in touch via text and telephone regularly.

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



4. During the time I knew Moira prior to 19 March 2023, I thought she was one of the most intelligent women I had ever met. She was honest and always spoke truthfully. She was always a huge support to me in times that I was struggling. She would always offer me words of encouragement and firmly but gently give me her honest opinion on how to proceed with the issues at hand. I always valued her opinion and trusted her as a person to whom I could open up.

#### **Moira's Reputation (Prior to 19 March 2023)**

5. Within the Soccer Team, Moira had a reputation for having a great sense of humour. She was known as someone who made an effort to get to know the other girls and made sure everyone felt welcomed. She was a great soccer player and was loved by the team. We were all disappointed when Moira had to stop playing due to a knee injury.
6. Moira introduced me to some of her colleagues in the Liberal Party. I met them during Liberal Party events and fundraisers. Often, after Moira would speak at these events, I interacted with attendees. From those interactions, I observed that Moira had a reputation amongst these persons as someone who was passionate and strong and a person who takes a stand for what she believes in. Amongst these persons I observed that she was respected and admired for those qualities. She was considered to be someone who had a bright career within the Liberal Party.
7. Within my social circles, before 19 March 2023, Moira was well respected and had a reputation for being honest, driven, devoted to her Christian faith and dedicated to helping others. My friends, family and work colleagues liked and respected her and what she stood for. They identified with her commitment to furthering the safety and protection of children and women. This is something that many of my friends, family and colleagues (and I assume most people in general) would previously have agreed with.
8. My family have known Moira for quite a while, and before 19 March 2023 they admired her honesty and regarded her as a truthful person. Whenever I told my family that I had seen Moira, they would ask about her with genuine interest, and say words to the effect of "give her my best". Those with a faith background would often say to me words to the effect of "I am praying for her". Within the faith community, before 19 March 2023, she was described as being a very "Godly person", meaning she is devoted to her faith and displays the teachings of the Bible in her everyday life.

#### **Damage to Reputation and Hurt Feelings**

9. Following the statements and allegations which her Leader, John Pesutto, made about her on 19 and 20 March 2023 (**Publications**), Moira told me that she started almost immediately receiving hateful messages and threats online. I recall that Moira expressed to me that these comments made her fear for the safety of her children. She told me she

was reluctant to take her children to their usual activities out of fear that people would say something to them or to her in front of them. In particular, she said she was terrified that people would call her a Nazi, and as a result think she was raising her children to hold Nazi beliefs. I could tell from the way she was speaking about this that it made her angry and distressed.

10. I have generally tried to avoid reading social media comments about Moira, as I know it would make me angry due to the hateful nature of the comments she was receiving. Nevertheless, I do recall seeing negative comments on X and Facebook whilst scrolling through social media. My recollection is that many of the comments regarding Moira were accusing her of being a Nazi and a bigot. I do not ever recall seeing any such comments prior to the Publications.
11. Not long after the Publications, Moira told me that other Members of Parliament did not want to be seen with her. She said she had been on friendly terms with many Members of the Parliamentary Liberal Party prior to the Publications but that many of her colleagues within the Liberal Party have now distanced themselves from her since the Publications. She said she was saddened by this and that she felt that the Publications made it impossible for other Members of the Party to be seen with her publicly. She said that going to Parliament has been distressing as a result, and she now feels isolated and alone.
12. More recently, I have noticed some of my colleagues (in my catering work) have started to question Moira's values and integrity. For example, at some stage (I cannot recall precisely when), I had a conversation with a colleague who asked me whether it was true that Moira had associations with Nazis or white supremacists.
13. Moira told me she was deeply hurt by the fact that Mr Pesutto in the Publications had tried to draw a connection between her and the men that performed the Nazi salute on the steps of Parliament on 18 March 2023. Moira told me that she could not believe that Mr Pesutto was alleging that she was a Nazi or that she associated with Nazis. She said that it was a bizarre connection to draw. Even so, she has told me that she is scared that people will think the allegations are true because the leader of the party was the one making these allegations and was trying to expel her as a result.
14. She has said to me that she had never experienced this level of stress before. I could see that she was struggling to function day to day; she seemed overwhelmed and stressed by the Publications. It all became too much for her and she completely shut down immediately after the Publications. I could not get into contact with her for about two months and was very worried about her.

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15. Moira tried hard not to let people publicly see that she was struggling to cope with the accusations Mr Pesutto made against her, but having known Moira and her husband Andrew for many years I became increasingly worried about her and so did Andrew.
16. I have observed that since Mr Pesutto's allegations Moira does not appear to me to be able to think as clearly and she has been unable to work as efficiently. I have observed that Moira has become increasingly distracted and forgetful. When I was with her at work, I could see that she was so physically sick from the stress that she was struggling to do her daily work as a Member of Parliament. She would get so stressed that she would not eat; this still happens today.
17. I have observed that, since the Publications, Moira appears to me exhausted and like she has not slept. I often stay the night with Moira on Tuesday nights when she is sitting in Parliament. I have noticed that she is restless and that she cannot get to sleep properly. I had never observed this previously. She cannot switch off and stop thinking about Mr Pesutto's allegations and the impact they are having.
18. Since the Publications I have observed Moira having trouble making decisions and she has become increasingly indecisive. Prior to the Publications, Moira was a very clear thinker; she had a great mind and was very quick on her feet. People would struggle to argue against her because of how sharp and well read she was. She would always offer considered and well thought out responses and it was clear that she had conducted extensive research and thought about the issue at length before forming an opinion. It would drive me crazy because I could never win an argument against her. Her clarity of mind is now not what it previously was.
19. I have seen Moira go through various difficult periods in the past, but Mr Pesutto's accusations have had a starkly different and greater impact on her. The accusations and media surrounding them were triggering for her in light of her earlier traumatic experiences. As her friend, Moira has shared with me the emotional struggles she has faced on account of these traumatic experiences. Although I did not know her when these traumatic experiences occurred, I was able to be there and provide support during her recovery. Moira was able to come to terms with and recover from her previous traumas at her own pace and, most importantly, in private. She could not do so following the Publications because of how public they were and due to the overwhelming and ongoing media attention that followed them. Due to this publicity, Moira has not been able to make a private and personal recovery but rather it has become an all-encompassing focus of her life, hindering her ability to emotionally recover from Mr Pesutto's allegations.
20. She has told me she feels overwhelmed and disappointed that Mr Pesutto made the allegations against her. She said she felt like she had been ostracised in Parliament and



she found it very difficult to attend to her duties as an elected official. I recall when she was first preselected and ultimately elected to the Legislative Council, she was very excited about having a meaningful impact in Victorian politics. She was very positive and had clarity about the goals she wanted to achieve in Parliament and was very optimistic about it. Although Moira wants to do well for her constituents and continue to fight for the issues she values, since the Publications, it has been harder for her to focus on her political career and the things she wants to achieve because the accusations have been hanging over her head. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] She is worried and upset that this has destroyed her personal and political purpose in life.

Sworn by the deponent  
at Melbourne  
in Victoria  
on 27 May 2024  
Before me:

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Signature of deponent



Signature of witness

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE FOR VICTORIA  
Mark Wood

Name and qualification of witness

[REDACTED]  
C/- Honorary Justice Services Support  
[REDACTED]

