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Form 59
Rule 29.02(1)

Affidavit of Moira Deeming

VID 1023 of 2023

Federal Court of Australia
District Registry: Victoria
Division: General

MOIRA DEEMING

Applicant

JOHN PESUTTO

Respondent

Affidavit of: **Moira Deeming**

Address: [REDACTED]

Occupation: Politician

Date: 27 May 2024

I, Moira Deeming, of [REDACTED], say on oath:

1. I am the Applicant in these proceedings.
2. In this affidavit, I adopt the defined terms used in my Statement of Claim filed on 5 December 2023.
3. Exhibited to this affidavit is a paginated bundle of documents marked 'Exhibit MD-1'.

Background

4. I was born in 1983 in Timboon, Victoria.
5. My family were supporters of the Australian Labor Party and had no affiliation with the Liberal Party of Australia. My family had a long history of public service. My great-grandfather, for example, was John Joseph Holland, a Labor MP for over thirty years who

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[Version 3 form approved 02/05/2019]

MPK

K. Phelan

had been a Councillor for the City of Melbourne. When John died, his son Kevin took over John's seat as a Labor MP.

6. My father was a high-school teacher and a member of the unions, and my mother, who is a qualified nurse, previously worked as a senior official at the Australian Nursing Federation.
7. I attended a Catholic High School, St Francis Xavier College in Beaconsfield, Victoria. I finished school and obtained my Victorian Certificate of Education in 2001.
8. I got a scholarship to study at La Trobe University, and I studied there from 2002 to 2005 and obtained a Bachelor of International Relations in 2005.
9. While I was at La Trobe University, I met my now husband, Andrew, who was also studying there. He was captain of the men's soccer team and I was captain of the women's team. We started dating in 2003 and got engaged and then were married in 2005.
10. In 2006, I obtained a Post-Graduate Diploma of Education from the University of Melbourne.
11. While I was at school and university, I worked various part-time jobs including at Coles, McDonalds and Safeway (now Woolworths). I also did volunteer work. I volunteered at Sacred Heart in St Kilda with my Aunt, Terry Gellert, from approximately 2000 to 2004. We spent time with and prepared meals for the homeless. Terry and I had a very close relationship and she was like a second mother to me. Around this time, I also did some work for the Australian Nursing Federation.

Working as a teacher and researcher

12. From 2006, I worked at various private and public secondary schools as a teacher in Victoria. I taught English, Literature, Legal Studies, Philosophy, Science and Psychology. I worked intermittently and part-time as a teacher whilst raising our children, who were born in 2008, 2012, 2016 and 2018. I am still a registered teacher but have not been teaching since I was elected as a Member of Parliament in November 2022.
13. Between 2021 and 2022, I also worked as a researcher for the Church and Nation Committee of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria.

Entry into politics

14. In around 2005, Andrew and I joined the Liberal Party. We were members for approximately 3 years, until approximately 2008 when we let our membership lapse. Having a new baby meant I could not commit the time I thought was required to usefully assist the Liberal Party at that time.

MPC

K. Gellert 3

15. I re-joined the Liberal Party in early 2014 after being inspired by hearing John Anderson speak at a fundraiser for the William Wilberforce Foundation.
16. I was asked to run for the Liberal Party by the then MLC for the Western Metropolitan Region for either the seat of Sydenham or the new seat of St Albans.
17. In September 2014, I was preselected for the seat of St Albans, and I ran for that seat for the Liberal Party in the 2014 Victorian state election. I did not win the seat but I achieved 32.5% of the two party preferred vote. The Liberal Party two party preferred vote for St Albans was reduced to 28.46% at the 2020 state election when Trung Luu, now current MLC for Western Metropolitan Region, ran there for the Liberal Party. As the lead Upper House candidate in the 2022 state election, I was able to help the next St Albans candidate, Councillor Maria Kerr, achieve a two party preferred vote of 40.44%.
18. In 2018, I ran for preselection for the Liberal Party's second position for the Western Metropolitan Region seat in the Victorian Legislative Council for the 2018 state election. I was not successful but accepted the third position (although I thought this had no realistic chance of winning). Although I was not going to be personally elected in the 2018 state election, I still campaigned for the Liberal Party in all 11 seats. I enjoyed the process of campaigning and speaking to people within the community and was happy to support the Liberal Party.

Councillor in Local Government

19. I ran as a candidate for Watts Ward in the 2020 Melton local election on 24 October 2020. I received the highest first preference vote (21.49%) of any Liberal running in the Western Metropolitan Region and was elected as a Councillor. The next highest was 12.87%.
20. I served as a Councillor in the Local Government for the City of Melton from 2020 until 2022.
21. During this time, I used my position to seek to foster Liberal Party values in the political sphere, as a known Liberal Party member. I networked with many people and organisations across the political spectrum, including to attempt to build a working political consensus around the protection and reinstatement of sex-based rights.

2022 Victorian election

22. In mid-2022, I was nominated to become the first candidate for the Western Metropolitan Region for the Liberal Party. I had support across all factions of the Liberal Party and I was successful in winning my preselection. I felt honoured to be entrusted by the Liberal Party membership with representing the party in the Western Metropolitan Region.

WDE

W. Luu

23. At page 1 of Exhibit MD-1 is a copy of a letter of endorsement I received from Senator Sarah Henderson in support of my application for endorsement to represent the Liberal Party at the 2022 federal election.
24. During the 2022 state election I campaigned tirelessly in all 11 Western Metropolitan Region seats during the two weeks of pre-polling. I had a great time speaking with and connecting with the voters.
25. I had a lot of people volunteer to campaign for me within the Western Metropolitan Region. I had the support of great quality local candidates and lots of volunteers. For years previously, in the western suburbs, many polling booths had been left unmanned for elections; or others were manned by people who had to work a full day shift. For this election, I was able to send volunteers to all seats that needed them. As a result, every booth in the Western Metropolitan Region was manned for every single hour, for both the weeks of prepoll and on election day. As far as I am aware, this had never previously happened in the western suburbs. I also worked hard to ensure we had scrutineers in key seats, which to my knowledge was unheard of in the western suburbs. I also had donors who provided financial support, which meant we could pay for materials for letterboxing. I had volunteers who were able to letterbox a number of target seats at least once. Some seats even got multiple letterboxing rounds.
26. I was also able to attract donations to the Liberal Party for Western Metropolitan seats and many seats had more money to spend on their campaigns than they ever had before.
27. I organised a campaign launch for the Western Metropolitan Region which attracted over 450 attendees. To the best of my knowledge, this was the largest Liberal event that the region had ever seen and was larger than most (if not all) of the Liberal Party campaign launches that year.
28. The 2022 Victorian state election result was generally bad for the Liberal Party despite there being a 2.30% two-party preferred swing to the Liberal/National Parties Coalition. The results for my Western Metropolitan Region were an exception. All our 11 seats had a larger swing towards us than the state-wide average, and 8 of 11 seats had more than twice the swing towards us than the statewide average.
29. As expected, due to the preference deals and multitude of parties in the the Legislative Council, there was a 0.19% swing against the Liberal Party for the total Metropolitan Region (East, South, North and West). However, in my Western Metropolitan Region, we had a swing to the Liberal Party of 3.65% which was the largest swing to the Liberal Party out of all the Victorian regions. The 'below the line' first preference vote for me was the



second highest of the newly elected MPs, behind Renee Heath MP (Member for Eastern Victoria Region), and much higher than some established Liberal MLCs.

30. On 26 November 2022, I was elected to the Victorian Parliament as the Member for Western Metropolitan Region. I was excited and honoured to have been elected, proud of all the hardworking lower house candidates in my region, and excited for the future of the Liberal Party in the western suburbs of Melbourne. I thought I could now make an impact on the issues that mattered to me and to my region. I was looking forward to being a part of the Victorian Parliamentary Liberal Party team, and to demonstrating all the ways I could contribute to the team. I was excited about what my political career might look like. I felt that I was starting a new and exciting chapter of my life. I was also honoured to find out that I was the first Māori Australian Member of the Victorian Parliament.

Voting for Leadership Team (8 December 2022)

31. On 8 December 2022, there was a party room meeting to vote for the Leadership Team. John Pesutto MP had previously asked me to apply for the role of Liberal Party Whip, and I did. At the meeting, I was unanimously voted to be the Liberal Party Whip in the Legislative Council. I was happy and honoured to have been voted Whip.
32. At around this time, I had a conversation with Mr Pesutto in which I told him about my advocacy for sex-based rights and safeguards. I recall telling him, in effect, that I realised these could be controversial issues. But I said I had massive grass roots support for my position on these issues and that I was good at speaking about them and winning people over in relation to them. I understood his advice to me was that I could advocate on these issues provided I did so respectfully.

Maiden speech

33. On 21 February 2023, I gave my maiden speech as a new MP.
34. After I gave the speech, I received many emails from members of the public. I did not read all the emails but I was told by my staffers that they were overwhelmingly positive. My recollection is that the emails were sent by people across the political spectrum, including Labor, Liberals, Greens and 'Teals'.
35. I also received many messages, including on Facebook, which praised my speech and were otherwise supportive.
36. My maiden speech was also posted online and went viral. I received positive comments and feedback online where videos of my speech had been uploaded.

MPE

KAD

International Women's Day

37. On 8 March 2023, International Women's Day, I gave a speech in Parliament in which I said:

My adjournment matter is also for the Minister for Women. First of all, I would like to note that on this International Women's Day it is my honour to be a part of the first ever Legislative Council to have a majority of female MPs. In many ways we women of the upper house are treading a path opened up for us by Dame Enid Lyons, who was the first woman elected to the House of Representatives and who was also a proud member of the Liberal Party.

However, I must also note with sadness the scandalous fact that women's rights have actually gone backwards in this state. Many of the hard-won rights that women have fought for so that we could fully and equally participate in public life over the course of the last 100 years are lost. We no longer have the right to female-only public toilets, change rooms and refuges, and all those so-called affirmative action measures like gender quotas, scholarships and grants that were supposed to be just for women are lost now too. Female-only sports leagues, which gave so many young women, me included, access to fair and fun sporting competition are now also lost. Females have lost the right – the basic right – to associate exclusively with each other. We are not allowed to have female-only gyms, and even lesbians are not allowed to have female-only dating apps. Violent male sexual offenders are housed with vulnerable female prisoners. In fact there is a vulnerable group of women in my area, in the Dame Phyllis Frost correctional centre, who have reached out to me, to the government and to the media, crying out for help because they are scared and they are vulnerable and they look around the world and they see what has happened to other women in prisons where violent male rapists have been housed.

Why has this situation happened? It is because the government cannot seem to crack the code of what the word 'woman' actually means. Thankfully, I have the formula: 'woman' is a noun and it refers to an adult human female. We are also losing the right to even speak up and disagree about this. We are labelled vile. We are labelled bigots. But it is not hateful to ask for sex-based rights. They are, after all, originally a category of human rights. Will the Minister for Women Natalie Hutchins let women speak to her and join us on the steps of Parliament on 18 March for the listening post and actually hear what women have to say on this issue?

Let Women Speak Rally

38. Late in 2022, I learned that Kellie-Jay Keen and Standing For Women (SFW) would be doing an international Let Women Speak (LWS) tour in 2023 and that the Melbourne event would be hosted on 18 March 2023 (LWS Rally).
39. In January 2023, I attended a two-day Coalition Conference (January Coalition Conference), which was my first introduction to the Victorian Parliamentary Liberal Party team. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] I asked Mr Pesutto to meet with me in one of the breaks that day. I again raised with him my advocacy on sex-based rights. I told him I wanted to advocate for these issues, about which I felt strongly, but that I never wanted to do it in such a way as to cause trouble within the team. I asked if he would meet with me in the near future to give me advice as to how I should advocate for these issues without dividing the team (as I had just witnessed between Mr Newbury and Mr Walsh). He agreed, but subsequently never contacted me to set up the meeting. I also told Mr Pesutto that I planned on attending Ms Keen's LWS Rally in March 2023. I recall him saying he didn't know who Ms Keen was and I encouraged him to look her up. I said it would be good if he met with her, and some of the other women, to hear their views. I understood from our discussion that he was open to this.
40. Subsequently, I had another conversation with Mr Pesutto in which I again raised that I planned on attending the LWS Rally and I invited him to meet Ms Keen, on 18 March 2023, privately before the LWS Rally, so he could hear her views and perspectives. He agreed and asked me to book in the meeting with his office. I called his office to book in the meeting.
41. On 16 March 2023, Mr Pesutto's office contacted my office to cancel the meeting which had been scheduled for Mr Pesutto to privately meet with Ms Keen on 18 March 2023. Mr Pesutto did not contact me or excuse himself or explain why he would not be meeting Ms Keen on 18 March 2023.
42. On 18 March 2023, I attended the LWS Rally.
43. At that time, it was my understanding that Mr Pesutto knew I would be attending the LWS Rally because:
- (a) as at paragraphs 39 and 40 above, I had had conversations with Mr Pesutto in which:
- i. I told him about the LWS Rally and that I would be attending it;

- ii. I invited him to meet Ms Keen ahead of the LWS Rally, so he could understand her views and perspective; and
 - iii. he agreed to meet Ms Keen and told me to book in a meeting with his office;
- (b) on 8 March 2023, I had given a speech in Parliament (as set out at paragraph 37 above) in which I had said I would be attending the LWS Rally;
- (c) on 11 March 2023, I published the following tweet:

 **Moira Deeming MP** 
@MoiraDeemingMP

This week in Parliament, I invited @NatalieHutchinsMP, Victoria's Minister For Women, to attend the 'Let Women Speak' listening post on the steps of Parliament on March. #LetWomenSpeakAustralia @ThePosieParker



3:31 PM · Mar 11, 2023 · 81.6K Views

255 Reposts 35 Quotes 1,008 Likes 38 Bookmarks

    38 

Handwritten signature

Handwritten signature

(d) on 14 March 2023, I published the following tweet:



44. Mr Pesutto never warned me I should not attend the LWS Rally, or that I should not associate with Ms Keen or the speakers or organisers of the LWS Rally. He never directed me, or gave any indication, that I should not do so. He never suggested that, if I did attend the LWS Rally or associate with Ms Keen or the speakers or organisers of the LWS Rally, he and the Leadership Team would consider that I had brought discredit upon the Parliamentary Liberal Party and myself, and that he would thereby seek to expel me from the Victorian Parliamentary Liberal Party.
45. In his Defence filed on 29 January 2024, Mr Pesutto makes various [REDACTED] allegations about my conduct before, during and after the LWS Rally and about my associations with Angie Jones and Ms Keen, two of the organisers of the LWS Rally. To the extent necessary, I will respond to those false allegations in my evidence in reply.

[Handwritten signature]

[Handwritten signature] 10

Call from David Southwick MP

46. At some stage after the LWS Rally, I received a call from David Southwick MP (Deputy Leader of the Victorian Liberal Party). Paragraphs 47 to 51 below set out my recollection of my conversation with Mr Southwick. In his Defence, Mr Pesutto makes allegations about this conversation. To the extent necessary, I will give further evidence in relation to my conversation with Mr Southwick as part of my evidence in reply.
47. Mr Southwick brought up the neo-Nazis who had been in the vicinity of the LWS Rally. At that time, I did not know for sure that they were Nazis. I had seen them do the Nazi salute as they were leaving, but I had not seen any Nazi insignia and there was a strangeness about them which made be question whether they truly were Nazis. I told Mr Southwick that, regardless, these men had nothing to do with the LWS Rally. I said they were nowhere near us and that nobody would think they were with us because they were just a group of racist men who had nothing to do with women or women's rights.
48. Mr Southwick said I needed Ms Keen to publicly denounce the men and say they had nothing to do with the LWS Rally. I told him I could ask her but could not force her to do so. I warned him that she may find it patronising and offensive that a man was demanding she publicly state the obvious - that she was not responsible for, and did not approve of, the behaviour of horrible racist men in the vicinity of the rally.
49. I recounted to him how I, and the other women at the LWS Rally, had been horrified and scared of these men.
50. He asked why I did not leave when they arrived. I said I did not know who they were and when they did the Nazi salute it was as they were already leaving (at this time, I had not seen the footage of them saluting on the steps of Parliament and did not know this had occurred).
51. He asked why I had not issued a press release to condemn the men. He said that he and Brad Battin MP (Member for Berwick) had already done so. I told him I had not even seen any media reporting about this because I had been busy all day and still was not home. I also told him that, as part of my training as a new MP, I had been told that MPs were not allowed to put out unauthorised press releases. I asked why the Leadership Team could not just put out a press release on behalf of every Liberal MP, denouncing and disassociating us all from Nazism and neo-Nazis, instead of just from two Members. He said that was not his job. He told me I would have to get Ms Keen to publicly say the neo-Nazis were not with the LWS Rally. I said again that I would ask Ms Keen but could not force her.
52. After my conversation with Mr Southwick, I told Ms Keen of Mr Southwick's request. I observed that she was angry and insulted that a rally raising the concerns of hundreds of




women was at risk of being ignored and overshadowed by a small group of badly behaved men unaffiliated with the rally. She said she was disgusted that Mr Southwick would even demand such a thing - that he would in any way imply that the women at the LWS Rally were in any way responsible for or associated with those men. She was adamant that she did not want the behaviour of those men (which she thought was disgusting) overshadowing the LWS Rally or even mentioned in the same sentence as it. She was furious that what was otherwise a successful rally might be overshadowed, and kept saying how proud she was of all the women who had participated in and spoken at the rally and how unfair it was that people would focus on a tiny group of nasty men instead of listening to women speak.

53. I said I agreed with her, but asked her if we could find a way to make it clear those men had nothing to do with us in a way that was not degrading and did not deflect the focus from the purpose of the rally. She suggested we could do a livestream where we focused on the women and how brave they had been and what a success the day had been and that we could mention the idiot Nazis in passing as having been unwelcome intruders, but that she would not be issuing a grovelling media statement. I thanked her.
54. But I was alarmed that Mr Southwick had suggested that people might think the Nazis were with us (which previously had not even occurred to me as a possibility) but had also been unwilling to do a press release on behalf of all Liberals. I understood Ms Keen's position, but personally I was happy to issue a statement disassociating myself from those men. However, as a new MP, I did not know how to do one. I rang one of my female staffers (I cannot recall which one) and asked her if she knew how to do a press release. She said she thought only the Party Leaders, Shadow Cabinet Ministers and the media office were authorised to do press releases under Liberal branding. She said that, in any event, she could not do it without a list of all the media email addresses to whom it would be sent, and that it would take hours to find them all. I asked her to put some words together for me in a draft.
55. While I was waiting for the draft, I reflected on the fact that Mr Southwick had refused to do a team press release, and had asked me to do one on my own, which previously I had understood I was not allowed to do. This was confusing and disturbing to me, and I began to feel very uneasy. I decided that the best I could do at such short notice, and without all the facts at hand, was a social media post. I decided to do it rather than wait for a draft from my staffer. As I still wasn't 100% sure whether the men were actual Nazis, I condemned them without labelling them as Nazis (as I was raised to do, because Nazism and the Holocaust are never to be spoken of lightly).

56. At approximately 6.03pm on 18 March 2023, I published the following tweet (**18 March Tweet**):



57. Later that evening, Katherine Deves, Ms Keen, Ms Jones and I filmed the livestream which Ms Keen had suggested (as set out at paragraph 53 above). The video was subsequently uploaded to YouTube (**18 March Video**). In his Defence, Mr Pesutto makes allegations about the 18 March Video. To the extent necessary, I will give further evidence in relation to the 18 March Video as part of my evidence in reply.

Meeting with Leadership Team on 19 March 2023

58. On 19 March 2023, at about 11am, I received a call from Georgie Crozier MP (Member for Southern Metropolitan Region) to attend a meeting with the Leadership Team of the Parliamentary Liberal Party at the Party's offices in Melbourne CBD. I asked Ms Crozier what the meeting was about and she said it was about "everything that happened yesterday at the rally". I said I didn't think I could come in that day, because I had four children and it wasn't easy to organise a babysitter at such short notice. Ms Crozier replied that it was non-negotiable and that I'd be there whether I liked it or not. I agreed to come. I felt I had no alternative as a new MP of just over 3 months. I asked who would be there and she said the Leadership Team. She didn't give me any agenda of what would be discussed at the meeting and she didn't offer for me to bring any other support person such as another MP or other representative.

uDE

K. Jones

59. In attendance at the meeting on 19 March 2023 (**19 March Meeting**), other than myself, was: Mr Pesutto, Ms Crozier, Mr Southwick and Matthew Bach (then Member for the North-Eastern Metropolitan Region in the Legislative Council), and another man who at the time I did not know (but who I now know was Mr Pesutto's then Chief of Staff, Rodrigo Pintos-Lopez).

60. [REDACTED]

61. [REDACTED]

62. [REDACTED]

63. [REDACTED]

64. [REDACTED]

clp

RPL 14

65. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

66. Mr Pesutto asked me if I knew any Nazis. I was shocked, and initially thought he might be joking. I said no. He asked three times "Are you sure?". Each time I responded that I was sure. But I started to feel sick and very uneasy, and it began to dawn on me that they were going to try to blame me somehow for the men who turned up at the rally.

67. [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

68. [REDACTED]

69. Mr Pesutto directed Mr Pintos-Lopez to read out content from his laptop about how Ms Keen was a "known supporter of Nazism". At first, I was shocked and genuinely thought he must have been reading some actual evidence. I said I was sorry but that I had never heard or seen any such allegations before.

70. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

71. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

72. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

UPE

[Redacted text block]

73.

[Redacted text block]

74.

[Redacted text block]

75.

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76.

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[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

79.

[Redacted]

80.

[Redacted]

81.

By this stage I had had enough. I felt they were looking for an excuse to get rid of me despite there being no legitimate reason – and so they were going to make one up instead. I was suddenly dispirited and exhausted.

82.

[Redacted] Mr Pesutto told me to wait while they left the room for a private discussion. After 30 minutes or so, they returned. I felt completely shattered and shocked.

83.

[Redacted]

WDE

WDE

84. Ms Crozier followed me to the elevator to escort me out of the office. While we were waiting for the lift, and again on the way down in the lift, she kept saying "I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry". I did not respond to her because I was so upset.
85. When we got to the street and I began to walk away, she put her hand on my arm to stop me, turned me to face her, and said again "Moira, I'm so sorry". I was thinking to myself that the women who raised me in the union movement would not have tokenised themselves like this – by doing dirty work shoulder to shoulder with bullies but then begging for private forgiveness. I was so disappointed. I thought about saying words like "Georgie, either I deserve this and you've got nothing to be sorry about, or I don't deserve this and in that case why would I console you?". I looked at her but didn't say anything, then I moved her hand off my arm and turned and walked away.
86. A day or so later, I made some handwritten notes as a short summary of the 19 March Meeting, which are at pages 2 to 5 of Exhibit MD-1.
87. I felt Mr Pesutto and the others in the Leadership Team ambushed, attacked and bullied me in the 19 March Meeting.
88. In his Defence, Mr Pesutto makes allegations about the 19 March Meeting. To the extent necessary, I will give further evidence of what occurred at the 19 March Meeting in my evidence in reply.

The Media Release

89. When I got home after the 19 March Meeting, I rang Greg Mirabella, the then State President of the Liberal Party of Australia Victorian Division, and told him what had happened at the 19 March Meeting. He said it was ridiculous and that he would call Mr Pesutto. He told me I should just go to bed and rest because, at the very least, nothing would happen that night because Mr Pesutto would have to go to the party room first.
90. I was so stressed and tired that I lay down on my bed and fell asleep.
91. I woke up a few hours later to discover that Mr Mirabella had been wrong. It was already on the news that Mr Pesutto had announced his intention to expel me. I recall when I woke that Andrew was already fielding calls from people and was having to defend me from people who were asking if it was true that I had gone to a Nazi rally.
92. I went online and saw the 'Media Release' (Schedules A and B of the Statement of Claim). I think I first saw it on Twitter. I had a visceral initial reaction to reading it. I felt physically ill and thought I was going to vomit.




93. I had never expected, following the 19 March Meeting, that Mr Pesutto would publicise his accusations about me rather than dealing with them internally. It was a total shock to see the Media Release online. I was upset because I thought he was trying to publicly damage and humiliate me because he knew from speaking with me that he didn't have a proper case to expel me, so he was deliberately forcing the issue to be played out in public rather than private. I felt he was trying to taint me as toxic to the rest of the MP team in the lead up to any vote on my expulsion. This was distressing for me because I thought this would make the other MPs afraid of negative media consequences if they supported me in the expulsion vote. I thought he was trying to undermine me publicly ahead of any debate or discussion about the proposed expulsion and whether it was justified.
94. I was also confused when I first read the Media Release because I had understood from the 19 March Meeting that Mr Pesutto and the Leadership Team were expelling me because they regarded my advocacy for sex-based rights and safeguards as 'fringe' and 'extreme' and somehow inconsistent with their vision of a modernised Victorian Liberal Party. I had told them I had no associations whatsoever with Nazis. I thought, with utter disappointment and dismay, that Mr Pesutto had decided to smear me with Nazism to hide the true reason for the proposed expulsion. I was furious that he knew that the Nazis were not involved with the LWS Rally. I felt a real shock at the maliciousness of the Media Release. I could not avoid the fact that this could not have been an accident or good faith mistake by Mr Pesutto (like so many of the people calling Andrew and me were hoping). I knew he could not have made a mistake and this terrified me because I thought he was trying to destroy me.
95. Sometime after I saw the Media Release online, I saw Mr Pesutto's email to members of the Victorian Parliamentary Liberal Party. This made me feel worse because I felt that he was trying to undermine and tarnish me in front of my colleagues. I was upset he never presented my side of the story and never called for any proper investigation of what happened at the LWS Rally.
96. I remember feeling in a daze. My arms and legs were so heavy. I was in total shock. I could not believe this was happening. I was so depressed that after all my hard work, and the hard work of so many people who had supported me to get me into Parliament, I now felt like I had failed them all. I felt ashamed and depressed and did not know what to do. It was degrading and humiliating.
97. I also felt in the dark and unable to defend myself because the Leadership Team had refused to show me the 'evidence' which was on Mr Pintos-Lopez's laptop, so I still did not

know what 'evidence' Mr Pesutto was proposing to rely on to seek to justify the proposed expulsion and could not refute it when people asked me about it.

98. When I started to analyse the Media Release more closely, I saw how carefully crafted and curated it was. I was deeply upset at the following features of the Media Release in particular:

- (a) I thought Mr Pesutto was deliberately trying to mislead readers into thinking, without him saying it directly, that the "neo-Nazi protestors" to whom he referred in the first paragraph of the Media Release were attending and supporting the same "rally" which he was saying, in the third paragraph, that I attended. I thought he was suggesting that I shared in Nazi ideology and that, because of this, I deserved to be expelled from the Liberal Parliamentary Party (and by implication, the broader Liberal Party). He achieved this misdirection by not explicitly mentioning the name of the LWS Rally – "Let Women Speak" - or the fact that I and the LWS organisers had already condemned the Nazis.
- (b) There was no mention of Mr Pesutto's prior awareness that I was planning to attend the LWS Rally. This was a betrayal and infuriated me.
- (c) There was no mention of what I had told Mr Southwick during my conversation with him on 18 March 2023.
- (d) There was no mention of what I had told Mr Pesutto and the Leadership Team during the 19 March Meeting. I was upset that the true focus of the 19 March Meeting had been obscured. It had begun with, and focussed almost exclusively on, them trying to push me to abandon my advocacy on sex-based safeguards and rights. When that failed, they had invited me to resign voluntarily from the Liberal Party. Only when that failed did they turn to the issue of Nazism.
- (e) There was no mention that they knew I had repeatedly, strenuously denounced the Nazis and denied any accusations of supporting/sympathising with Nazism of any kind. This made me furious.
- (f) There was no mention that the true position was that I had refused to condemn LWS, or the organisers of the LWS Rally, in the absence of evidence and that when I had asked to see the "evidence" they were reading off the laptop, they refused to show me.

99. I was upset that Mr Pesutto was accusing me of organising, promoting and attending a neo-Nazi rally at which neo-Nazis had performed Nazi salutes on the steps of Parliament




House. He was clearly implying, I thought, that "where there is smoke there is fire". He was saying I was a neo-Nazi or some kind of Nazi sympathiser.

100. I was also struck by the powerful irony that Mr Pesutto was totally subverting the objectives of the LWS Rally – to 'let women speak'. The LWS Rally had been undermined by hateful men, and I felt that Mr Pesutto was using this in order to seek to punish and silence me. I was struck by the shocking reality that some men would go to unfathomable lengths to stop women from speaking.
101. My sense of shock and outrage got worse and worse. At some stage soon after I first saw the Media Release online, I also became aware that it had been published to Mr Pesutto's website and the website of the Victorian Liberal Party. It sickened me that the official Liberal Party branding had been used to endorse the Media Release. This humiliated me but also made me fearful that the authority and weight of the Liberal Party was being used to crush me. I was acutely aware of the imbalance of power between me on the one hand and the Leadership Team (projecting themselves as acting with the authority of the whole party, taking a united position against me) on the other. I was scared that nobody would believe me when the claims were being made by the four leaders of one of the two major political parties in Victoria. It was terrifying to me that this had been published as an official public Liberal Party document.
102. I felt utterly betrayed by the party in which I had placed my faith and trust over many years.
103. I was also devastated at the thought that the destructive force of this smear would not only destroy my career and my family name - harming my children and my husband - but it may also incite hatred and/or violence toward me and my family. I thought that if I could not get this erased from the public record, our lives would never be the same. I was worried I might never work again.
104. I was shocked at how cruel this first step was from Mr Pesutto. I also felt a real sense of fear and foreboding that this might only be the first step and things might get worse. I didn't know how to defend myself without turning the wider Liberal Party membership and MPs against me.
105. Throughout all this, I could not stop thinking that the Media Release would stain not only my name but also those of our children. I kept thinking about how my children and their children, and their children, etc, would forever be linked to Nazism due to what Mr Pesutto had said about me. This distressing thought has never once left me and has driven me to keep pursuing the exoneration that I feel I need and deserve.

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Reporting on the Media Release

106. The Media Release was reported on by the mainstream media that evening and the next day. I was appalled and distressed by some of the media reports about the Media Release, which I thought were suggesting I was facing expulsion for being complicit or involved in a neo-Nazi rally. I felt a real sense of foreboding, and sadness, because I could see that Mr Pesutto's Media Release was having its intended impact.
107. I also felt afraid and humiliated. I was worried that ordinary decent people, including the people who had voted for me at the election, would believe Mr Pesutto's narrative and would hate me. I was worried they would (rightly) view it as disgraceful for a Member of Parliament to have attended a rally with 'Nazis' or 'Nazi sympathisers', but would wrongly think I was guilty of having done that, and therefore would wrongly side with the Leadership Team in thinking I was deserving of expulsion from Parliament entirely, let alone the Parliamentary Liberal Party. And I was worried that, if Mr Pesutto didn't personally and officially undo what he had done, and quickly, the smear would never be able to be washed from my name. I felt in total despair. I needed to defend myself but didn't know how.
108. The speed with which Mr Pesutto had announced to the world that he and the Leadership Team intended to expel me for allegedly being involved with Nazis, and the publicity it generated as breaking news on a Sunday evening, was extremely distressing and humiliating for myself and my family. I was troubled that people would already be reacting to media reporting of the neo-Nazis saluting on the steps of Parliament, and now Mr Pesutto was linking me to those men in the same media cycle, resulting in the two things being conflated in people's minds and the scandal of it all snowballing. It was my worst nightmare to be falsely accused of something so heinous, when I had no chance of defending myself, and knowing that my reputation and career would be ruined forever. Most painful of all was how it would unavoidably taint my children's future too. I couldn't keep up with the articles and news stories and social media personalities that began quoting from Mr Pesutto's Media Release and speaking about me as though I were connected with Nazism. It felt like a tidal wave of negative sentiment was drowning me.
109. Negative social media commentary about me exploded with offensive and shocking accusations including that I was a Nazi, a Nazi sympathiser, and that I associated with Nazis and organised the neo-Nazis to attend the LWS Rally. I received a huge number of emails and messages from people I did not know. Many of these were hateful and hurtful. I was extremely shocked and upset. I just didn't know what to do. I felt there was no way



that one woman could ever possibly contest the onslaught of abuse, lies, and slurs that rained down on me.

110. A profound sense of complete and utter isolation swept over me, and has never eased. I cannot adequately describe it. I felt unable to relate to others, or to express or describe my feelings. I began to lose my sense of connection with everyone in my life, even my husband and children and my closest friends. The experience of extreme stress and anxiety, of isolation and powerlessness that swept over me, has never eased.

Phone calls to MPs

111. I became aware, not long after the Media Release was published, that Mr Pesutto and others from the Leadership Team had called other Victorian Liberal MPs to let them know he proposed to expel me from the Parliamentary Liberal Party. Over the last 6 months, I have learnt more about what was said during these calls. I became aware, for example, that David Southwick had called Richard Riordan MP (the Liberal Member for Polwarth) on 19 March 2023 and said words to the effect that I had organised a Nazi event and had been drinking and hanging out with Nazis, and partying with them, and that they had the evidence to prove it. I also became aware that Mr Pesutto had called Kim Wells MP (the Liberal Member for Rowville) on 19 March 2023 and said words to the effect that I had organised for Nazis to attend the rally. When I became aware of these calls, it devastated me. I knew there was no road back after this – either I would be finished or Mr Pesutto would be. It felt like it was now a fight to the death. I did not want to be in this situation and had always wanted it resolved quickly and peacefully, but with fairness. But when I found out about these calls, I felt that Mr Pesutto and Mr Southwick had never had any intention of seeking a resolution. They had set out to damage and utterly destroy me from the very outset.

3AW Interview

112. In the morning of 20 March 2023, Pesutto gave the '3AW Interview' to Neil Mitchell (Schedule C of the Statement of Claim).
113. The 24-48 hours after the publication of the Media Release was incredibly stressful and I do not now have a recollection of which of Mr Pesutto's many interviews with and statements to the press I heard or saw at the time and which I only discovered later. I think I did not listen to the 3AW Interview live but became aware of it shortly afterwards and listened to it.

114. I recall listening to it and being outraged and upset. I couldn't believe he was doubling down after the Media Release and doing an interview on the radio to spread his disinformation and lies about me. Every time he did an interview, it felt like he was poisoning people against me. I was confused and devastated. I couldn't understand why he kept pushing the story. I thought that, every time he spoke, he said new things. He didn't seem to care about the truth.
115. In general, it felt to me like Mr Pesutto was trying to spread his lies about me as fast and as far and as wide as possible. It seemed to me he was doing a blitz to try to destroy me and to ensure his proposed expulsion would be successful no matter whether it had a proper basis or not.
116. I knew Mr Mitchell was then the highest rated radio host in Melbourne and one of the most prominent and listened to radio hosts and political commentators in Australia. It upset me that Mr Pesutto must have known that this interview would, following the Media Release of the previous night, greatly excite listeners of 3AW as the first to hear him speak on my proposed expulsion and the reasons for it. Again, I felt as though he was deliberately trying to turn the public against me.
117. I was upset that he kept mentioning Liberal Party values or Victorian values. This really struck me and I was offended and upset that he was suggesting my values were abhorrent to him and the Liberal Party and all of Victoria. I was distressed that he was trying to whip up a frenzied mob to hound me out of society.
118. I was upset he was being highly misleading and selective in what he was saying. For example, he said that the neo-Nazis had turned up to the rally and were there to support the rally, when he knew this was untrue; he was attacking me for associating with people like Ms Keen who he said had known links to Nazis, even though he knew I didn't accept she had any such links and in any event didn't know about them; in general he was leaving out everything I had told him during the 19 March Meeting.
119. I was also upset that he said he knew I was not a Nazi. I thought he was being incredibly slippery – he knew I was not a Nazi, but this was the implication of what he was saying. I felt so angry because I felt it was just another malicious act by Mr Pesutto, who I thought as a lawyer and a politician must have known that the effect of his words would be that people would think I was a Nazi of some degree.

ABC Interview

120. That same day, Mr Pesutto also did the 'ABC Interview' (Schedule E of the Statement of Claim). I heard it at some stage that day.
121. I was shattered because it was becoming clear to me that Mr Pesutto was doing as many media opportunities as he could. He still hadn't sent me the expulsion motion, or showed me any of the 'evidence' said to support it, but in the meantime he was turning the whole world against me. I thought he was not only turning journalists against me but also Members of the Victorian Parliamentary Liberal Party who would ultimately be voting on the expulsion motion.
122. I was upset that throughout the ABC Interview he kept focussing on the Nazi salute on the steps of Parliament even though he knew this had nothing to do with me or the LWS Rally.
123. I was scared about how people would react to what he was saying because he was being deliberately vague with his language. For example, he said the Liberal Party does not "stand with" neo-Nazis and white supremacists, and I was terrified that people could only interpret this to be implying that I did stand with them and that's why I had to be expelled. He also said the Liberal Party would not tolerate neo-Nazis or white supremacists "or anybody who sympathises with them"; again, I was upset people would take this to mean that I sympathised with them, and that's why I had to be expelled. I thought this was why people started using those sorts of words against me online – saying I stand with Nazis, or sympathise with them, or support them – because they were regurgitating Mr Pesutto's own words.
124. I thought the ABC Interview was incredibly unfair. I thought it was a reversal of due process. He was giving these interviews before he had even given me the expulsion motion and was letting it play out in public before the party room had even resolved it.
125. I couldn't understand why he would hate me so much to be doing this. I thought he was intent on ruining me and my career at all costs – no matter if I was innocent or what it would do to my innocent children.
126. I was also worried about my former students and their families. I was distressed to think they might think what Mr Pesutto was saying was true. It was excruciatingly embarrassing and humiliating.



Press Conference

127. Later that morning on 20 March 2023, Mr Pesutto gave the 'Press Conference' (Schedule F of the Statement of Claim) with the other members of the Leadership Team standing behind him. I saw articles which quoted from it, and later I heard the audio of what he had said.
128. Watching the four leaders stand together, united as one, with Mr Pesutto as their spokesperson - was devastating. Here was the whole Opposition Leadership Team, the whole Parliamentary Liberal Party Leadership Team - all standing together to spread falsehoods about me. It was the most upsetting footage I have ever watched in my whole life.
129. I felt like the situation was out of control and he would never stop attacking me.
130. I felt depressed and furious. I felt powerless and vulnerable. I felt alone and isolated and without any way to defend myself. Again I felt the imbalance of power; they had arranged a press conference from which they could further spread the lies about me.
131. I was disgusted and furious that he referred to having undertaken "further investigation". He was making it seem like they had properly investigated what had happened. But I knew he had not and he was ignoring everything I had told him. He kept falsely suggesting the Nazis were participating in the same rally I was at and that I shared a platform with them. I thought that his entire purpose in the Press Conference was to make people think I was a Nazi or Nazi sympathiser.
132. I couldn't believe that he said that if the expulsion motion didn't pass he would 'bounce back'. I felt shattered. I would never be able to bounce back from this. I thought he was treating me and my life and my children as cheap, expendable pieces in a political game.

Call from Kim Wells MP

133. At some stage on 20 March 2023, I received a call from Mr Wells. I did not know him personally and had only met him once or twice. He asked me whether it was true that I associated with Nazis and had organised the neo-Nazis to attend the LWS Rally. I said no. The fact that Mr Wells had to ask me this really disturbed and upset me. I thought this proved what I had feared - that other MPs now thought or suspected that I was involved with the Nazis. I also told Mr Wells about the 19 March Meeting. I told him the Leadership Team had all bombarded me with questions and had accused me of associating with Nazis. I told him I had denied this and other accusations. He asked if I

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had been told I should bring a support person and I said no. He expressed concern for my welfare.

Facebook and Twitter statements

134. At approximately 4.27pm, I issued a statement on Facebook, which is at page 6 of Exhibit MD-1.
135. At approximately 4.42pm, I published the same statement on Twitter, which is at page 7 of Exhibit MD-1.
136. Amongst other things, in this statement (**20 March Statement**), I said:

I also condemn of the actions of the masked men in black who were later identified as Neo-Nazis, who gate-crashed the Let Women Speak event. Most of the LWS supporters did not realise who they were until they were being escorted out by Victoria Police, when they did the despicable Nazi salute.

I completely reject the beliefs of National Socialists (Nazis) and I have seen first-hand the impact that the Holocaust had on a family member.

None of those organising the event had any involvement with these men, as has been confirmed by Victoria Police, the Australian Jewish Association and all the organisers themselves.

137. The reference in my 20 March Statement to the Australian Jewish Association (**AJA**) was a reference to a Facebook post published by the AJA at approximately 1.49pm and a Twitter post by the AJA at approximately 3.17pm on 19 March 2023 which are at pages 8 to 9 of Exhibit MD-1.

Expulsion Motion and Dossier

138. At approximately 5.42pm on 20 March 2023, Mr Pesutto sent me an email attaching the Expulsion Motion and Dossier.
139. This was the first time I had ever seen the "evidence" against me. At first I was relieved, in part because I had finally seen the evidence and in part because I thought it was patently untrue and that now surely justice would be able to be done. But I was also deeply hurt that Mr Pesutto was sending out this material to support his position when, clearly, it didn't. I was worried that, because of all the things he had said since the Media Release, it wouldn't really matter what was in the Expulsion Motion – that people would just assume it was legitimate evidence and that it supported what he had already publicly said. I was

outraged he was continuing to attack me and pursue the expulsion even though I could now see they never had any evidence.

140. Overall, by this time, I was feeling extremely distressed by the Leadership Team's disingenuous interrogation of me at the 19 March Meeting and the false accusations being made against me by Mr Pesutto over and over again on 20 March 2023. I regarded all this as a media campaign orchestrated and pursued by Mr Pesutto to destroy me. And now he had published the Expulsion Motion and Dossier. All these things made me feel like I was being hunted by him and the Leadership Team.

141. I was shocked and upset that Mr Pesutto had proceeded with the Expulsion Motion and Dossier despite knowing that I had said the accusations against me were false. He had not even mentioned my denials in any of his statements. I had referred him and the Leadership Team to exculpatory material (such as the livestream footage) which showed I had no association, or at the very least no knowing association, with neo-Nazis or Nazism. I had also seen emails sent to him and the Leadership Team by members of the public, including people who had been at the LWS Rally, who were telling him he was mistaken about what he was saying occurred. Mr Pesutto chose to ignore all this. For example, he did not refer to:

(a) my 18 March Tweet (referred to at paragraph 56 above);

(b) what I had told Mr Southwick on 18 March 2023 (referred to at paragraphs 47 to 51 above);

(c) the answers and information I had given to him and the Leadership Team during the 19 March Meeting (referred to at paragraphs 59 to 83 above); or

(d) my 20 March Statement (referred to at paragraph 136 above).

Reporting on the Expulsion Motion and Dossier

142. Very soon after that, the media started reporting on the Expulsion Motion and Dossier.

143. I assumed at the time that Mr Pesutto had leaked the Expulsion Motion and Dossier to the press. Again, as with the publication of the Media Release, I thought Mr Pesutto had publicised the Expulsion Motion and Dossier in an attempt to influence MPs to vote for the proposed expulsion. I thought he had publicised it in order to publicly humiliate and undermine me. I was distraught by the relentless of the media reporting. I knew a fresh onslaught would start now that the Expulsion Motion and Dossier had been made public.

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Intimidation by Mr Southwick's office

144. In the days following the publication of the Expulsion Motion and Dossier, I was hoping to have one-to-one private conversations with MPs in my office to explain the truth to them. But I saw two staffers from Mr Southwick's office were sitting outside my parliamentary office. I felt sick when I saw them. One of them was sitting so he could see through my door into my office and right at me, at my desk. He would grin and stare at me. I considered this was a transparent attempt to intimidate me personally, and also to intimidate and record other MPs who might want to visit me and ask me questions in the lead up to the determination of the Expulsion Motion. It made me feel humiliated, isolated and threatened. I also saw it as part of Mr Pesutto's ongoing attempt (supported by Mr Southwick) to subdue and silence me.

Events of 21 March 2023

Publications by The Herald Sun

145. On 21 March 2023, The Herald Sun published a two page spread of articles entitled "State to outlaw Nazi Salute", "Deeming is looking like Bernie Finn 2.0, and it could also be John Pesutto's make-or-break moment" and "Risky Bid to expel sitting MP – Opposition leadership on the line" (Schedule D to my Statement of Claim).
146. Shannon Deery's article said that until Mr Pesutto's Media Release, "there had been much discussion and media coverage of Saturday's Let Women Speak rally" but that "[a]lmost none of it mentioned Deeming". Around this time, I was told by several journalists that the media was not going to link me to the LWS Rally or the Nazis until Mr Pesutto's office briefed them to do so. I was told nobody was talking about me at the LWS Rally until Mr Pesutto did. This increased my sense of outrage that Mr Pesutto had sparked all the abuse and hatred I was receiving.
147. I was most furious about the photographs. There was a huge photograph of me and Ms Keen in the foreground which was superimposed on a photograph of the neo-Nazis saluting on the steps of Parliament House in the background. I was extremely worried and upset that this linked me visually to the neo-Nazis. I also thought it looked as though they were saluting me and Ms Keen. I was scared it would make people think I attended with the Nazis or that there was mutual support between us or that I had stood near or with them.
148. At around this same period, in the lead up to and in the days following the first expulsion vote, the media began to follow me and surround me and block my path and film me

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everywhere I went - even at my home with my children present. This distressed me to no end. I felt I had lost my privacy, and that my children had lost their privacy. I felt dehumanised and hounded.

149. I don't know who gave the media my home address. But they would wait on our nature strip and across the road, and all rush up to any car that entered our driveway, trying to get footage and soundbites, so we had to warn our family and friends not to visit, and to avoid the media. But that meant my children felt like they were under house arrest. Camera crews would repeatedly come onto our property with their cameras rolling and knock on the door. One camera man hid behind my bin and frightened me when he jumped up to film me. At one stage (I cannot recall precisely when), I discovered that the side gate at our home had been unlocked and pushed open into our backyard where our children play. That gate can only be opened by an adult. Either Andrew or I (I cannot now recall) reported this intrusion into our home to the police. I felt that my address was no longer private and that my family and I were in danger. Following this, I made sure all the blinds were down on all our windows and police did patrols around our house. The children now didn't even get natural light, or visitors, or a chance to leave due to the invasive media presence. I felt terrified for their safety and had nightmares about intruders and people filming my littlest children through our windows in a state of undress.
150. I was also told by Parliament staffers to watch out for the media on Parliament grounds at any point because they'd seen a cameraman crouching down behind my car, waiting to jump up and film me. The staffers said they knew I would find that frightening and so they had told him off the cameraman and told him to leave, but they couldn't monitor the media on Parliament grounds - so I needed to be wary.

Meeting on 21 March 2023

151. There was a meeting of the Victorian Parliamentary Liberal Party on 21 March 2023 (**21 March Meeting**).
152. Ms Heath, who at that time was the Secretary of the Victorian Parliamentary Liberal Party, took notes of the 21 March Meeting. A copy of Ms Heath's notes of the 21 March Meeting are at pages 10 to 13 of Exhibit MD-1. Those notes accord with my recollection of the 21 March Meeting as a summary of it.
153. During the 21 March Meeting, Mr Riordan moved a motion to delay the Expulsion Motion. My recollection is that some of the Members speaking in favour of the motion were saying that the Expulsion Motion was extremely serious and should be delayed for that reason,

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whereas the Members speaking against the motion were saying the Expulsion Motion was extremely serious and should be dealt with as soon as possible for that reason.

- 154. There were views expressed that the contents of the Dossier did not justify the proposed expulsion. There was a sentiment being expressed that delaying the Expulsion Motion would save face for Mr Pesutto and save his leadership, give everybody time to think more clearly about what to do and how to handle the issue and find a resolution, rather than smearing me, a new MP, with Nazism and expelling me. But Mr Pesutto refused to withdraw the Expulsion Motion or even just support the motion to delay the expulsion meeting until after the Aston by-election on 1 April 2023.
- 155. In his Defence, Mr Pesutto alleges that during this meeting I *“demonstrated a continued failure to appreciate the implications of her association with Keen and Jones, having regard to their associations, views and conduct.”* I dispute this but will give further evidence of what occurred at the 21 March Meeting in my evidence in reply.

156. [REDACTED]

Combined Impact of the Publications

- 157. The publications – the Media Release, the 3AW Interview, the ABC Interview, the Press Conference, and the Expulsion Motion and Dossier (together, **the Publications**) – had such a significant emotional impact on me, that week and still ongoing, that I cannot adequately describe it.
- 158. In the days following the Publications, I felt shell shocked. I have in the past always tried not to cry in front of anyone, not even Andrew or our children, but now I cried frequently. I couldn't help it. I often stayed in my room for long periods. I would stay in bed and I had no energy. I started losing track of time almost immediately. I felt frozen. People that know me know that if I start to forget things, I'm not coping and I'm not in a good headspace. I was now confused; I couldn't remember what I had just done or what I had

to do next. I would find myself standing in a room, not knowing what I was meant to be doing.

159. I felt degraded and humiliated. The whole process was very dehumanising. I felt that nobody was seeing me as a mother with four children for whom I was responsible. I felt that Mr Pesutto and the Leadership Team did not see me as a human but rather as some sort of political unit. I was very disturbed by this. I wondered what sort of monsters they were, who didn't care about me but only about the political career of the leader of the party. They seemed not to care about justice, or the truth.
160. I was upset and thought it was unfair that Mr Pesutto had presented the Publications in a manner which I regarded as unnecessarily urgent, excessively distributed, and over-sensationalised.
161. I became fearful of going out in public. I stopped wanting to go out with our children, because I was scared they might get hurt or spat on or otherwise caught in the middle of this terrible situation.
162. I stopped eating. I would forget to drink and eat, and sometimes Andrew would have to remind me to do so. I lost weight.
163. I felt utterly isolated and lost.
164. I felt I had lost control of my life, and of my fate and the fate of our children.
165. Following the Publications, I found myself the target of a wave of abuse and hatred, in various forms.
 - (a) I received abusive and hateful emails from members of the public. I had received very few such emails prior to the Publications. Suddenly, for the first time, I was being inundated with these abusive and hateful emails from people who believed Mr Pesutto's narrative that I was knowingly associated with Nazism.
 - (b) I also received abusive and hateful private messages on Facebook and Twitter.
 - (c) I was also aware that people were calling our office and leaving voicemails. My staffers told me we were receiving abusive calls. They told me about people who called the office pretending to be Adolf Hitler, or wanting to speak with "the Nazi". It was all a blur of hate but I recall being told there were repeated references to Hitler or to Nazis. My staff were themselves getting emotional about this. We had to get one of our male staffers to answer calls because of the level of hate we were receiving.

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This was traumatising for them, and for me. I felt responsible for them and guilty that my own party had done this. I didn't know how to protect them. I felt helpless, and under attack wherever I was, whatever I was doing.

- (d) On approximately 26 March 2023, I read a letter I had received saying I was a disgrace to the Liberal Party and Australia and that Adolf Hitler would love me. A copy of this letter is at pages 14 to 16 of Exhibit MD-1. I felt in despair and humiliated. I felt again a sense that the situation was out of control and I could never unwind the damage done to me.
166. I felt isolated. It was like I was radioactive. Colleagues stopped talking to me. Sometimes they would cross to the other side of the hallway. This was not just Liberal members. People I previously would say hello to or interact with in Parliament, now would avoid making eye contact with me and look the other way; they would ignore me and cross to the other side of the hall.
167. It seemed everyone had turned against me.
168. I saw my sleep therapist in approximately April 2023. I observed that she behaved very differently towards me. The first thing she said to me was something like "Somebody's been a naughty girl, haven't they?". It was degrading. I had to spend about 20 minutes explaining to her how none of it was true. I was worried she might not give me my medication. From that moment forward, I have struggled to book and attend any service - medical or otherwise - under my own name without immense dread and distress.
169. The injustice of it all grated on me day and night, and it still does. I could not comprehend that this could happen - right out in the open in front of the whole world. I was so hurt that the Leadership Team had betrayed every principle we were supposed to protect - women, children, family, free association, free speech, due process, civil rights, even just common decency. I wondered how they could ever be trusted by ordinary people to fight for their rights when they so callously and unfairly persisted in persecuting an innocent woman and tearing strips off her in front of the whole world.
170. My perception was that they thought I would be an easy target; that I would throw a tantrum and quit; that I would never have the ability to stand up to them, to the media frenzy they fostered, or even just to the terrible pressure of it all; and that I would be crushed and cowed and disappear. But that was never going to happen. I could not allow them to destroy my family name and force my children to live under the smear of Nazism. I thought it was the kind of thing you could not allow to happen to your worst enemy, let alone your own children. I felt driven to fix this for everyone. I was so ashamed that it was my party

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that did this to them. It made me feel sick to be part of a team with people in it who would do this to innocent people. I really felt physically nauseous about it.

171. I also felt powerless to defend myself. I was receiving advice from some of those around me, especially Members of Parliament, not to make any public comments because I should not be seen to be speaking against Mr Pesutto and the Leadership Team and that the only way to fix it was to do so behind closed doors. This made me feel powerless because Mr Pesutto was out there day and night controlling the narrative while I was forced to wait and trust that the issue could be resolved privately once it was realised that what Mr Pesutto was saying was wrong. Other people kept telling me I was dumb for not dealing with the media. I was being told by journalists that Mr Pesutto or his office were backgrounding them; some of these journalists were mocking me, saying I was naive for not responding through the media and staying silent.

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172. I was, and continue to be, deeply distressed because I do not understand why Mr Pesutto and his Leadership Team have acted so maliciously towards me. I feel as though Mr Pesutto's actions are targeted to destroy me utterly – my career, my future, my family name – and thereby harming my children and their future. I have never been able to make sense out of it and his actions seemed to me to come out of nowhere because I was not guilty of anything they were saying and they knew it. I couldn't believe they were pushing ahead publicly despite knowing what they knew. I was partly raised by a Holocaust survivor; my husband is part Jewish; I am part Māori; I am supported publicly by many LGB groups and transgender people; I fostered a Vietnamese asylum seeker. The accusations Mr Pesutto had made against me go against everything I am and everything I have worked for and have been incredibly distressing and humiliating.

25 March 2023

LWS event in New Zealand

173. On approximately 25 March 2023, I saw the footage of Ms Keen getting surrounded and physically assaulted in New Zealand. I was incredibly upset. My heart began to race and I felt nauseous and weak. It struck me just how lucky we had been to avoid that kind of mass-mob physical attack at the LWS Rally in Melbourne. Instead, I had been subjected to a political attack by Mr Pesutto and those who support him. It was especially hurtful because it was my own leader that had done it to me - knowing I was innocent, he nonetheless persisted in doubling down again and again no matter what evidence or what offers to save face were presented to him. The brazenness of it, the lack of any remorse whatsoever - the relentless media campaign to cause a wave of public anger toward

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women they knew were innocent - that was a type of malice I'd not ever experienced before and it still hasn't stopped.

Mr Pesutto's article

174. On 25 March 2023, Mr Pesutto published an article about me entitled "*Decency and diversity must unite us*". Amongst other things, in that article, Mr Pesutto wrote: "*Nazis have no place in our community and those who share platforms with or associate with extremist groups, including neo-Nazi activists, have no place in the Liberal Party.*" I hadn't seen this article at the time and have only discovered and read it recently. When I read it, I thought Mr Pesutto was directly saying that I shared platforms with and associated with extremist groups, including neo-Nazi activists, and that is why I was being expelled from the Victorian Parliamentary Liberal Party as having no place in it. It makes me sick that this is another example of him undermining my reputation at the time by speaking about me like I'm a dangerous, despicable aberration and portraying me as unworthy of being in the Liberal Party or public society.

26 March 2023

175. On 26 March 2023, at approximately 2.51pm, I sent an email to Members asking them to vote against the Expulsion Motion (**26 March Email**). A copy of my 26 March Email is at page 17 to 19 of Exhibit MD-1.

Events of 27 March 2023

Meeting on 27 March 2023

176. The meeting of the Victorian Parliamentary Liberal Party to vote on the Expulsion Motion occurred on 27 March 2023 (**27 March Meeting**).
177. On the morning of the 27 March Meeting, I sent an email to Members with my response to the Expulsion Motion and Dossier, which I informed them had been prepared by my then solicitor. A copy of my email is at pages 20 to 21 of Exhibit MD-1 and its attachment (my response to the Expulsion Motion and Dossier) is at pages 22 to 28 of Exhibit MD-1.
178. Pesutto as leader was Chairman of the 27 March Meeting.
179. Ms Heath, as then Secretary, took notes of the 27 March Meeting. Subsequently, there were three versions of Ms Heath's account of the 27 March Meeting which are at pages 29 to 45 of Exhibit MD-1 (the first version at pages 29 to 33, the second version at pages

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- 34 to 39, and the third version at pages 40 to 45). Each of those three versions is consistent with my memory of the 27 March meeting.
180. During the 27 March Meeting, people spoke for and against the Expulsion Motion. It greatly upset me each time someone spoke in support of it. I was upset that Mr Pesutto seemed to make the issue about him, not me. It was grating that he said it had been a difficult week, as though his difficulties were comparable to mine. It upset me that he said the decision was not personal; it seemed deeply personal to me. I was distressed that the Leadership Team continued to lie to support their position. Mr Bach suggested I was an extremist which shocked and upset me. It disturbed me that they seemed to lie so easily, without any embarrassment or empathy. There was something inhuman about it. I had a sense my life was being ruined. Conversely, a number of people spoke in opposition to the Expulsion Motion. I was struck by Nick McGowan MP (Member for North-Eastern Metropolitan) saying words to the effect that if I was expelled the party would be labelling me as a Nazi, which he said is like calling someone a murderer, a rapist, or a paedophile, and that there is not a penalty that is worse than that. I knew he was right and I was terrified that even though that was obvious to every one of them in that room, that they might actually do it to me even though I was innocent.
181. Prior to the 27 March Meeting, I had prepared a speech. After the other Members had spoken, I read this speech. Before I did, I responded to Mr Southwick who had been the last person to speak in favour of the Expulsion Motion. I said words to the following effect: "I'm glad you raised your Jewish heritage. Because I also have Jewish connections. I was raised by my aunt and uncle. My uncle was a Holocaust survivor. You're not the only one with a connection to the Jewish community. That's why it's been extra hurtful to me that I could be accused of this."
182. After those improvised remarks in response to Mr Southwick, I proceeded to read my speech. A copy of the text of my speech (as I subsequently sent it to Ms Heath by email on 30 March 2023) is at pages 46 to 52 of Exhibit MD-1.
183. Having to read this was degrading and humiliating and traumatic for me. I felt like this was a Kangaroo court, and that I was utterly at the mercy of the party room to decide my fate on allegations I felt they all knew were untrue and couldn't hold up in any real court.
184. After I spoke, Mr Pesutto called for a short break. I was in one corner of the room and Mr Pesutto and the Leadership Team were on the other side of the room. I was traumatised and shaking. David Hodgett MP (the Member for Croydon), Ryan Smith MP (then Member for Warrandyte) and Mr Wells approached me about the potential for a compromise. I cannot now recall the precise sequence of these discussions, but they were effectively

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acting as intermediaries between me, on the one hand, and Mr Pesutto and the Leadership Team on the other. Initially, someone asked if I would accept a proposal whereby the Expulsion Motion would be withdrawn if I accepted a 12-month suspension. I said no. I said I had done nothing wrong. I kept saying that Mr Pesutto had to unsay everything he and the Leadership Team had said about me. I said I would never accept any compromise without a complete exoneration and a retraction of everything Mr Pesutto and the Leadership Team had said about me.

185. Then it was suggested I might accept a 9-month suspension. I asked why I would accept that, since I had done nothing wrong and the public would want to know why a brand new MP was put on the cross-bench even though she was innocent. Mr Wells said that was the Leadership Team's problem. He said it was the only way to save both me and Mr Pesutto. He said that, to get my exoneration, I had to save Mr Pesutto's leadership and this required me to "take a hit" (or words to that effect). He said it was the best deal I was ever going to get and that in his whole career he had never seen anyone defeat a disciplinary motion like this.
186. I felt I had no choice and no time to think. This seemed to me to be the only way I could remove the Nazi slur for the sake of my children and retain my position. Mr Wells and Mr Smith and others were imploring me to accept a compromise. I was physically backed into a corner of the room and felt trapped. I was emotional and humiliated, and exhausted. I couldn't think and felt I was being forced to make a significant decision right then and there. I had been expecting the Expulsion Motion to either succeed or fail; I was not prepared for this situation at all.
187. Eventually I said I would agree to accept a 9-month suspension but only if Mr Pesutto would publish an official signed and stamped statement (just like the Expulsion Motion) which exonerated me from every single one of the accusations and imputations that he had published about me. I made it very clear – and I checked with Mr Wells multiple times that he understood and the Leadership Team understood - that I would not accept any compromise unless Mr Pesutto retracted every single claim he had made about me, including that I was associated with Nazis and had brought the Liberal Party into disrepute. I also checked and ensured that I would be automatically reinstated at the end of the 9-month suspension. Mr Wells and Mr Smith spoke to the Leadership Team and returned to tell me that Mr Pesutto had agreed to those terms.
188. As I understood it, the compromise was
- (a) I would not be expelled but would be suspended from the party room for 9 months;




(b) I would be automatically re-instated to the party room after those 9 months; and

(c) There would be a joint media statement from me and Mr Pesutto which would exonerate me from all claims including by making clear I was not associated with Nazism in any way and that I was not a Nazi or Nazi sympathiser.

(27 March Compromise)

189. After that, Mr Pesutto called for the resumption of the meeting. He announced that he withdrew the Expulsion Motion and a compromise had been reached. This was met with applause.

190. Mr Pesutto said that the compromise was that I would be suspended from the party room for 9 months and that there would be a joint media statement which would make it clear that no one was accusing me of being a Nazi or Nazi sympathiser. I objected to those words right away, and said words to the effect "That's not true. You did accuse me." Mr Wells spun around and told me to be quiet and respect your leader. I was so shocked and discouraged by this, and I was so exhausted, that I fell silent. The broad terms of the compromise (but without the detail I had ensured was agreed to) were read out. It was put to the party room, there was a vote, and it was approved.

Preparation of the joint statement

191. After the 27 March Meeting, I waited for a long time in my office with Andrew for Mr Pesutto to come and get me for the joint statement.

192. At some stage Mr Pesutto walked past my door. I jumped up and asked "When are we doing the joint statement?", or words to that effect. He didn't even stop walking but said his office would get in touch with me to start working on it.

193. After a further wait, I went to Ms Heath's office to chat and wait for Mr Pesutto to meet with me to prepare the joint statement. I asked her to contact Mr Pesutto to ask where he was. She told me she texted him to say I had asked her to find out when he would meet me for the joint statement and that I was waiting for him. She told me he had responded to say he would get his office to get in touch with me to start working on it. I returned to my office and kept waiting with Andrew.

194. At some stage while I was waiting for Mr Pesutto to meet me to prepare the joint statement, and unaware that he had already given a press conference (see paragraph 204 below), I became aware of rumours online that I had made "concessions" and condemned the

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organisers of the LWS Rally as Nazi sympathisers in order to save myself. So, I published the following tweet (27 March Tweet):

← **Post**



Moira Deeming MP 
@MoiraDeemingMP

...

Don't worry, I never condemned you, or KD or KJ.

5:25 PM · Mar 27, 2023 · 138.3K Views

39 Reposts 50 Quotes 404 Likes 8 Bookmarks



195. I was finally summoned (I cannot recall by whom) to a meeting where I thought the joint statement would be prepared. I asked if I could bring my husband, Andrew, but was told no. Mr Southwick and Nick Johnston (Mr Pesutto's Director of Communications at the time) were there. I cannot recall if Mr Hodgett was also at this meeting. I asked where Mr Pesutto was and Mr Southwick said he was acting for the Leadership Team. At this meeting, Mr Southwick handed me a draft statement, a copy of which is at page 53 of Exhibit MD-1.
196. I was furious and immediately rejected this statement as being the exact opposite of what had been agreed, which was a joint statement from me and Mr Pesutto which would exonerate me and retract the claims in the Expulsion Motion and Dossier. I told Mr Southwick, again, that the Nazis had not "attended" the LWS Rally. I asked him where was the exoneration I had been promised. I asked where Mr Pesutto was. Mr Southwick said he was representing the Leadership Team and that I had to get my half done first. I said I would never sign this statement. Mr Southwick said that if I didn't sign it, they would have to recall all the MPs back into the party room for another vote. He said everyone would be furious at me and I would definitely be expelled this time. He said my career would definitely be over if that happened. I was disgusted and regarded these statements as an attempt to blackmail and coerce me. I was furious and outraged. I told Mr Southwick that it was not my problem if we had to return to the party room because this draft statement did not reflect the deal that was made and what I had been promised. I said I would rather return to the party room and be expelled than sign my name to this statement. I walked out of the meeting and returned to my office.

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197. I called Mr Wells. I raged at him. I said this was the opposite of what had been agreed. He assured me that everything would be OK, that it was just a negotiation, and that the party room had agreed I would be exonerated in a joint statement, but that I had to get my part done first.
198. After that, I had a further meeting with Mr Southwick. This time, they allowed Andrew to join me. Mr Hodgett was also there.
199. During this further meeting, Mr Southwick kept trying to pressure me to denounce LWS, Ms Keen and Ms Jones. He said I had already denounced LWS and had conceded that I was wrong to have attended the LWS Rally. I said that was a lie. He said I had done so in the document I had emailed that morning (referred to at paragraph 177 above) and in a previous email I had sent expressing regret (which I took to be a reference to my 26 March Email, referred to at paragraph 175 above). I said I had very carefully chosen generic phrases in those documents in order to be gracious to the Leadership Team, who I thought were in fact to blame for the entire mess, but that I had never conceded I had done anything wrong or worthy of any type of punishment, and that I had never condemned LWS, nor Ms Keen and Ms Jones as being Nazi sympathisers in any way, shape or form. I said I had only agreed to a sanction in order to help Mr Pesutto save face for the sake of the team and to get a full exoneration. I said that if full exoneration was off the table, then it was over.
200. Mr Southwick said I was in this situation because I had refused to condemn the social media posts in the 19 March Meeting. I reminded him that I had never seen these posts until Mr Pesutto included them in the Dossier because the Leadership Team had refused to show them to me on their laptop during the 19 March Meeting. Mr Southwick said this was because they didn't have the evidence organised at the time of the 19 March Meeting. This infuriated and shocked me. I looked at Mr Hodgett and said words to the effect of: "Did you hear that? He just admitted that they decided to expel me before they even had evidence and they had to make it up later."
201. Mr Southwick kept repeating that the problem they had was that I had contradicted the leader with my social media post saying I had never condemned Ms Keen, Ms Jones and LWS. I was totally shocked by this. I said words to the effect of: "I wouldn't have to contradict the Leader if he stopped telling lies."
202. Mr Southwick kept trying, over and over again, to include in the draft statement my personal condemnation of the three women (Ms Deves, Mr Jones and Ms Keen). I was so tired and so fed up that I finally told him to stop doing that, and that if he did it again I would just walk out again.

203. I was exhausted. I hadn't eaten that day. Eventually, I agreed to a form of words. Alex Woff, from Mr Pesutto's Office, sent me the statement on WhatsApp and I approved it being released. However, I thought this was my half of the joint statement, which was going to be merged with Mr Pesutto's half (which I thought would be drafted together, as mine had been, and that it would be published as one statement). I had repeatedly asked where Mr Pesutto was and where his half of the joint statement was, and I had repeatedly been told I had to agree to my half first. Instead, "my half" was published by the Liberal Nationals Media, as a statement from me alone, without Mr Pesutto's promised exoneration. A copy of the statement which was published is at page 54 of Exhibit MD-1. I would never have agreed to this statement being published if I had known it would be published without Mr Pesutto's promised exoneration. I refused to ever publish it or endorse it myself because it was not the 'joint statement', with exoneration, I had been promised. I regarded it as a total betrayal and yet another malicious trick played on me.
204. I subsequently discovered that Mr Pesutto had already done a press conference soon after the 27 March Meeting. I was furious when I learnt that he had been quoted as saying:
- (a) That he had accepted my suspension, instead of expulsion, because "*Moira had provided what I had been seeking and recognised why it was important to do that*", and that "*the conduct that I wanted condemned has been condemned*"; and that
- (b) I had provided Members with a memorandum which "*contained a condemnation of the types of conduct that's referred to in the Dossier and which I'd been seeking all along. That was the reason for the notice of motion in the first place...So, having provided that information, it then provided an opportunity that I was able to identify to reach an outcome that would see a consequence attached to not having provided that condemnation at the earliest opportunity but also providing a way back so it's up for [sic] Moira to choose how she goes about that. But that information was contained, signed in a memorandum that Moira provided to Party room members, I won't provide that myself to you, but I was satisfied that it contained a condemnation that I had been seeking all along...Now understand what's happened here, I and my colleagues, we had sought from Moira, the concessions that she's provided this morning. We sought that last weekend on that Sunday night. Having received the material from Moira this morning, which contains that condemnation, I was satisfied that she understood why it was important to do that and also accepts why it's important for there to be a serious consequence*".
205. I was devastated when I heard this. He had double-crossed me and I was furious, because he had misrepresented my position and what I had said and had misrepresented

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the resolution which had been reached which was meant to have exonerated me. I was absolutely despairing at this point. I felt so powerless and wounded and furious all over again. And worst of all, this meant that the one thing I wanted most, and thought I'd won for my children – being the clearing of our family name - was now even further out of my reach than ever before.

Further interviews by Mr Pesutto

206. Pesutto was interviewed on the ABC 7.30 Report the same evening during which he made further statements which angered me because I thought they were misleading - including the following:

Presenter: *'Moira Deeming has walked back her condemnation of the Rally and its organiser. Will you move again to expel her from the Liberal Party?'*

Mr Pesutto: *'What I would say - if I just take our viewers back a step - I brought this motion last Sunday because I was very concerned that certain types of conduct by people associated with Moira Deeming and the conduct of that rally was totally unacceptable and I wanted a condemnation of that. Now, despite the passage of last week, we didn't get from Moira, until very early this morning, her specific condemnation of that, followed by what was in essence a very tough and emotional (interrupted).'*

Presenter: *'Moira Deeming published a tweet just a couple of hours ago, talking to the organiser of the rally and this is someone with very clear, for our audience, very clear far right associations, many of which you detail in the dossier that you presented to your own party room, she said speaking directly to that person 'don't worry I never condemned you'. So I just want to ask you, that is Moira Deeming walking back her condemnation which is also supported in the statement she made this evening. Will you move to expel her from your party?'*

Pesutto: *'If [the party room] sees evidence that there's a difference between what we were assured in written and oral presentations to the party room and what is being posted on social media then yeah, there will be consequences with that. The party will be looking very closely, all of us, who believed what was put to us. If, as I've seen this*

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evening, there are comments on social media that are inconsistent with that ... that is a matter Moira would have to take very seriously because there will be repercussions'.

207. I found Mr Pesutto's comments nightmarish and surreal – not just because of how brazenly untrue I thought they were, but also because I found them to be intensely sinister and threatening. They had a very profound and ongoing impact on me. I took his comments – especially when he said he and the party would be “looking very closely” at me – to mean that he would follow me, and monitor and scrutinise me, along with unnamed others from the party, and would pick apart anything I did or said, until I was broken and destroyed. After this, I started to have frequent nightmares that men from the Liberal Party were following me around and watching me, trying to intimidate me, isolate me and unnerve me. I couldn't calm my fears at all, because I felt I wasn't being paranoid in light of the fact that they had already demonstrated this sadistic behaviour with Mr Southwick's staffers stationed outside my office before the first expulsion meeting. I was so devastated from this point onwards that that my psychological and physical health began to rapidly decline. s136 Limitation
208. Following what I perceived as Mr Pesutto's threat towards me on the 7:30 Report set out at paragraph 206 above, combined with the past intimidation tactics of Mr Southwick through his staff, the media pressure, and the degrading, humiliating and malicious double-cross that had occurred after the 27 March Meeting - I found myself at the lowest I had ever been since I was a child. s136 Limitation
209. The media once again descended upon our home. One TV journalist even filmed herself knocking at my door and asking my little children if Mum was home and trying to get my child to open the door. I had rushed out to stop my child from doing this and heard what the journalist was saying. I was livid with this journalist. Up to that point, I had succeeded in ignoring the media at our home and in not giving them a single soundbite. But because she was trying to manipulate my child, I had to speak to her through the door and tell her to stop speaking to my children and that I wanted her to get off my property. I realised this was probably exactly what she wanted - but I had no choice - and of course the clip of me telling her to get off my property did air on her news show that night. It is simply impossible to express how furious I was with that journalist - that she would use my children as pawns for her two second clip.
210. I didn't think I could hold myself together in this environment. It was the final straw. It broke me. I needed to physically get away from everything. I told Andrew I wanted to get out of Victoria that night or tomorrow morning before the journalists came back. Andrew

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organised everything and we flew out the next morning to Queensland for two and a half weeks.

211. While we were there, I had some nice moments with my family but was easily exhausted and frequently had to be alone in my room.
212. In the final couple of days before we headed home, I became extremely distressed again. I had a terrible nightmare where I was being followed and about to be attacked by Mr Pesutto and Mr Southwick. My husband must have heard my distress because he forcibly woke me out of my nightmare. It took a long time for me to calm down, I was totally disorientated and distressed - I didn't know where I was.
213. I was still fielding phone calls and complaining to Mr Wells and others about the terrible betrayal and realising that I actually had no official internal dispute resolution mechanisms to appeal to now that I was outside the party room. It was bitterly distressing.
214. On the day we were flying back to Melbourne, I was so distressed and silent that my children all noticed. My son asked me if I was OK. I tried to reassure him, but I couldn't hold myself together and started crying. I told him I would be OK and that I was just feeling sad about going back to Melbourne because there were some bullies there. That was the first time I have ever cried in front of my children. It has been a principle of mine not to emotionally lean on my children or any children, and not to put the weight of my problems on their little shoulders. So for me to have cried in front of them was deeply upsetting to me, because I felt it meant I had failed to protect and shield them from all worrying about me and all the injustices directed at me. But now they knew. They were all very upset, but I could tell that out of all four of my children, my tears had been most deeply shocking and upsetting to my son - and I wished that I had been able to put on a stronger front for him.

Period between 27 March 2023 and 12 May 2023

215. Following the 27 March Meeting, I felt that I was ostracised by the majority of the other Members of the Parliamentary Liberal Party. I was shut out from Parliamentary Liberal Party and Liberal Party organisational MP resources and communications. I was also stripped of my position as Whip in the Upper House. I found all this to be humiliating and unfair, because I was honouring my half of the suspension deal, when John had utterly betrayed me and the party room by contradicting and refusing to honour his.
216. Following the 27 March Meeting, I had not been provided with any written record of the resolution which had been voted on and approved. Accordingly, on 28 March 2023, I sent

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an email to Mr Pesutto and Ms Heath, requesting a copy of the minutes of the 27 March Meeting. A copy of this email is at page 55 of Exhibit MD-1.

217. Mr Pesutto did not address my concerns, or even contact me, about the lack of documentation of the 27 March Compromise, or his refusal to honour it, or his failure to produce the minutes of the 27 March Meeting, or his false public statements about each of those matters. I felt shut out and upset.
218. The Victorian State Parliament was in recess during the Easter period in April 2023 and so there wasn't anything I could do about what had happened until Parliament sat again.
219. On 9 April 2023, I sent an email to Mr Pesutto and Ms Heath, requesting, for a second time, a copy of the minutes of the 27 March Meeting. A copy of this email is at page 56 of Exhibit MD-1.
220. On 26 April 2023:
- (a) I sent an email to Mr Wells, a copy of which is at pages 58 to 59 of Exhibit MD-1;
 - (b) I sent an email to Ms Heath, a copy of which is at page 60 of Exhibit MD-1; and
 - (c) I had a further email exchange with Ms Heath, a copy of which is at pages 61 to 62 of Exhibit MD-1.
221. I continued to seek official clarification of the conditions of my suspension and an explanation as to why Mr Pesutto refused to honour the 27 March Compromise. As Mr Pesutto and the Leadership Team refused to speak with me about these issues, Mr Wells represented my interests in discussions with the Leadership Team.

2 May Meeting

222. In May 2024, Mr Wells regularly kept me updated as to what was happening at party room meetings that I was unable to attend and about conversations he was having with other members of the Victorian Parliamentary Liberal Party. I also had conversations with Ms Heath about particular matters involving her. I cannot now recall whether, during this period, I learnt particular information from Mr Wells or from Ms Heath, but I had an understanding at the time of the following matters relating to a meeting of the Parliamentary Liberal Party which occurred on 2 May 2023 (**2 May Meeting**):
- (a) Mr Pesutto as Chairman and Leader of the Parliamentary Liberal Party queried the accuracy of Ms Heath's minutes of the 21 March Meeting and the 27 March Meeting.

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Mr Pesutto criticised Ms Heath, saying there were three versions of the minutes of the 27 March Meeting with no likeness to each other.

- (b) Open hostilities broke out among the MPs regarding the record of the conditions of my suspension, with MPs calling on Mr Pesutto to fulfil his half of the deal to prevent the issue from spiralling further out of control.
 - (c) Mr Pesutto moved a motion that he and his office work with Mr Southwick, Mr Wells and Ms Heath to decide - without me - on a final version of the minutes of the 21 March Meeting and the 27 March Meeting. This motion was passed.
 - (d) After the 2 May Meeting, Ms Heath sent an email to Members, a copy of which is at pages 64 to 65 of Exhibit MD-1.
223. At around this time, I bumped into Ms Heath on the street outside Parliament. She was in tears, and told me Mr Pesutto had accused her of lying. I was devastated that everyone who told the truth and supported me seemed to be being punished.
224. Following the 2 May Meeting, I understand that Ms Heath and Mr Wells tried repeatedly to follow up with Mr Pesutto and Mr Southwick about when they could meet to discuss the minutes of the 21 March Meeting and the 27 March Meeting. I understand that Mr Pesutto and Mr Southwick refused to engage with them on the issue or meet with them. In the meantime, the discussions between Mr Wells and the Leadership Team failed to reach an agreed position on the promised exoneration through a joint statement.
225. On 3 May 2023, I complained to Mr Wells that the whole saga was unjust, that it was dragging on and damaging my family and the Liberal Party, and that the Leadership Team needed to "rip the band-aid off" (or words to that effect) and honour the 27 March Compromise, because I wasn't going to disappear and I wasn't going to give up. I said that if they didn't make Mr Pesutto do as he'd promised, then I didn't see why I should keep fulfilling my part of the deal and that I would challenge my suspension and would propose that we bring in a lawyer acceptable to both sides to re-do the vote to suspend me and make sure everything was agreed and everyone had copies in writing. Mr Wells assured me that they would get Mr Pesutto to do as he'd promised.
226. Mr Southwick arranged to meet me and Mr Wells in my office. I informed Mr Southwick of my position, as I had relayed it to Mr Wells, emphasising that I wanted my exoneration by the next day or I was going to demand a re-do of the 27 March Meeting with a lawyer to arbitrate to make sure everything was recorded properly this time because it was unfair

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I was honouring my half when Mr Pesutto was not honouring his. Mr Southwick agreed and assured me that tomorrow my promised exoneration would be delivered.

227. That night, I became worried and realised that, just like the 27 March Compromise, I had no written record of the agreement with Mr Southwick from that day. Accordingly, I decided to write to the Leadership Team directly so that I would have a record in writing of the agreement with Mr Southwick made in my office, in front of Mr Wells.
228. At 6.45am on 4 May 2023, I sent an email to Mr Pesutto, a copy of which is at pages 66 to 67 of Exhibit MD-1. In my email, I referred to the potential for "legal proceedings". I had intended this to mean, and I thought in the context it was obvious that I meant, legal proceedings to seek to challenge my suspension and/or enforce the 27 March Compromise. This is what I had discussed with Mr Southwick and Mr Wells the previous day.
229. At approximately 10.38am on 4 May 2023, I forwarded my 6.45am email to Mr Wells. A copy of that email to Mr Wells is at pages 68 to 69 of Exhibit MD-1.
230. Mr Wells texted me to ask why Mr Southwick wanted to meet him. I went to Mr Wells' office and told him about my 6.45am email. Then, Mr Southwick arrived at Mr Well's office. Mr Southwick said he was furious that I had written an email to the Leadership Team and accused me of writing the email for the sake of lawyers or the media. I said I wrote it to see if the Leadership Team was genuine about the deal to provide Mr Pesutto's half of the 27 March Compromise by the next day. Mr Southwick said he had no recollection of any such agreement. I looked at Kim and said, "See?". I said to Mr Southwick words to the effect "Well, at least now I know for sure you never intended on honouring your part of the deal". Mr Southwick said that he had intended to. I said I didn't believe him. I said words to the effect "You just said you don't even remember your promise from yesterday". He said that the Leadership Team would not be mediating further because I had sought to impose a deadline. I said words to the effect "You were never mediating with me anyway; you were just wasting my time; and now I know it".
231. Mr Pesutto responded through the media, being quoted by the ABC as saying:

"I can say categorically that the exoneration that Moira has sought in the email this morning ... will not be happening. What was in the motion stands. Nothing in the dossier ever accused Moira Deeming of being a Nazi or herself having Nazi sympathies."

copy

[Signature]

232. I found this humiliating and enraging. I considered his comments to be mocking and smug. I felt that he knew full well that his own words, in public and private, had accused me of exactly those things and that he had deliberately led the whole world to believe exactly those things. I thought he didn't care about me, my children, or the damage he had done to me. I thought I was dealing with a monster. I felt gaslit and humiliated.
233. I couldn't believe I was getting portrayed as a trouble maker for defending myself. I had been publicly attacked, and then betrayed after we had reached the 27 March Compromise, and yet the narrative was now that I was holding a gun to their heads and that I was the unreasonable one. I found it intensely unfair.
234. It was now being discussed in the media whether I should be expelled from the party room over my threat of legal action.
235. In these circumstances, at 3.28pm on 4 May 2023, I sent an email to Members of the Parliamentary Liberal Party, a copy of which is at pages 70 to 72 of Exhibit MD-1.

The Second Expulsion Motion

236. In the morning of 6 May 2023, I published a statement on Twitter, a copy of which is at pages 73 to 75 of Exhibit MD-1.
237. At approximately 3.53pm on 6 May 2023, I was copied in to an email from Mr Newbury to Ms Heath, stating that he and others intended to move a motion that I be expelled from the Victorian Parliamentary Liberal Party (**Second Expulsion Motion**). A copy of that email is at page 76 of Exhibit MD-1.
238. Mr Newbury's email stated: "*The reason for the motion is that Moira Deeming has engaged in conduct in violation of clause 57, bringing discredit on the Parliamentary Party*". In addition to Mr Newbury, the Second Expulsion Motion was said to have been brought by Matthew Guy MP (Member for Bulleen), Cindy McLeish MP (Member for Eildon), Roma Britnell MP (Member for South West Coast) and Wayne Farnham MP (Member for Narracan).
239. I understood the reference in Mr Newbury's email to "clause 57" to be a reference to clause 57 of the Victorian Parliamentary Liberal Party Constitution (**Constitution**). A copy of the Constitution is at pages 77 to 99 of Exhibit MD-1.
240. At approximately 4.10pm, I was copied in to an email from Mr Pesutto to Members of the Victorian Parliamentary Liberal Party, a copy of which is at page 100 of Exhibit MD-1. The

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email stated that there would be a Special Victorian Parliamentary Liberal Party Meeting on 12 May 2023 at 12.30pm (**12 May Meeting**) in relation to the Second Expulsion Motion.

241. I did not know how to defend myself in relation to the Second Expulsion Motion, since it did not specify what "conduct" I had "engaged in" or state the reasons why I had allegedly violated clause 57 of the Constitution or why I had allegedly brought discredit on the Parliamentary Party.
242. Accordingly, on 7 May 2023, at 12.32pm, I sent an email to Liberal Members, a copy of which is at page 102 of Exhibit MD-1, asking for "*a copy of the alleged conduct that has apparently brought the Party into disrepute*".
243. At approximately 3.32pm on 9 May 2023, I sent an email to Ms Heath, copying in Mr Pesutto and Mr Newbury, Ms Britnell, Ms McLeish, Mr Guy and Mr Farnham, a copy of which is at page 105 of Exhibit MD-1.
244. I did not receive any reply to my emails of 7 or 9 May 2023. I had not been provided with a copy of the minutes of the 27 March Meeting, or any official written record of the 27 March Compromise, and now I had not been provided with an explanation of the reasons for the Second Expulsion Motion or any documents or evidence in support of it. Accordingly, I refused to attend the 12 May Meeting because I had no way to defend myself from unspecified allegations and had lost all faith in the fairness of the party room process and the integrity of Mr Pesutto and the Leadership Team.
245. I was upset and traumatised for a second time when the Second Expulsion Motion, just like the first one, was widely publicised. I was distressed and felt that I was re-living the same experiences I had just been through in relation to the first Expulsion Motion.
246. I was angry that Mr Pesutto had accepted the Second Expulsion Motion which I thought was in breach of clause 59 of the Constitution because: A) it was not signed; and B) it did not specify the reasons for the proposed expulsion. I was infuriated and shocked when Mr Pesutto publicly stated that the reasons for the Second Expulsion Motion had been well publicised already. I was upset because I understood this to mean that the Second Expulsion Motion was being brought for the same reasons as the first Expulsion Motion - that is, that in the absence of reasons for the proposed expulsion and given Mr Pesutto's refusal to publicly withdraw his accusations about me, the Second Expulsion Motion was reviving the first Expulsion Motion based on the "Dossier".

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247. On 11 May 2023, my solicitors served Mr Pesutto with my first concerns notice for the purposes of Part 3, Div 1 of the *Defamation Act 2005* (Vic) (and its counterparts in the other States and Territories) (**First Concerns Notice**).

Meeting on 12 May 2023

248. The Second Expulsion Motion was approved at the 12 May Meeting.

249. I did not attend the 12 May Meeting, for the reasons I have given at paragraph 244 above, but I was subsequently informed of the matters referred to below relating to the 12 May Meeting:

(a) I was informed that, at the 12 May Meeting, Mr Pesutto tabled his own version of the minutes of the 21 March Meeting and 27 March Meeting. A copy of those minutes are at pages 107 to 110 of Exhibit MD-1. In Mr Pesutto's version of the minutes of the 27 March Meeting, he described the resolution of the Expulsion Motion as follows:

Amended Motion

After discussion led by Mr Pesutto, the meeting agreed that Mrs Deeming not be expelled and that:

1. Mrs Moira Deeming be suspended from the Parliamentary Liberal Party, effective immediately for a period of nine months (until 27 December 2023);
2. The Leader's Office to work jointly with Mrs Deeming on an agreed statement to be made by Mrs Deeming;
3. The Leader confirms that there is no allegation made that Mrs Deeming is a Nazi or Nazi sympathiser.

Motion put and agreed to.

(b) It sickened me when I saw Mr Pesutto's version of the minutes. He had changed Ms Heath's description - that the party room had agreed to a "*joint statement*" from him "*in conjunction with*" me - to instead say that he was "*to work jointly with [me] on an agreed statement to be made by [me]*". This distressed and infuriated me. I felt he was trying to rewrite history to justify what he had done following the 27 March Meeting.

(c) I was informed that Members accused Mr Pesutto of having breached the motion which had passed at the 2 May Meeting (as referred to at paragraph 222(c) above), which had provided that Mr Pesutto was to work with Mr Southwick, Mr Wells and Ms Heath to present an agreed set of minutes for the 21 March Meeting and the 27 March Meeting. I was informed that Mr Pesutto and Mr Southwick had not fulfilled their obligation to meet with Mr Wells and Ms Heath to agree on the minutes, and that

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nobody had had any notice that Mr Pesutto was in the meantime preparing his own version of the minutes to submit.

- (d) Despite the matters to which I have referred to in the three preceding subparagraphs, Mr Pesutto's minutes of the 21 March Meeting and 27 March Meeting were adopted at the 12 May Meeting.
- (e) I was informed that Members argued that the Second Expulsion Motion should not be accepted because it contravened the Constitution, which provides that the motion must "*specify the reasons*" why a person should be expelled, but that Mr Pesutto defended the Second Expulsion Motion by saying that the reason for the expulsion was "obvious".
- (f) I was informed that Mr Pesutto claimed that the reason for the proposed expulsion was because of my threat to sue him for defamation. This infuriated me because this couldn't be true because my lawyers had only sent him my First Concerns Notice on 11 May 2023, the day before the 12 May Meeting but after the Second Expulsion Motion which was issued on 6 May 2023. I was upset that he continued to lie about me.
- (g) I was informed that Mr Pesutto told Members that my First Concerns Notice had threatened to sue each Member of the Victorian Parliamentary Liberal Party. Again, this angered me because it was false and I thought he must have known it was false. I was subsequently told that Bev McArthur MP asked to see my First Concerns Notice to understand the threat to Members, but Mr Pesutto refused to show it.
- (h) I was informed that Michael O'Brien MP moved a motion that Ms Heath's role as Secretary be made vacant. The motion passed and Ms Heath was removed from her role and Trung Luu MP (Member for Western Metropolitan Region) replaced her as Secretary.

250.

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Events following the 12 May Meeting

251. I have continued to suffer from the consequences and fallout of the Publications.
252. On or around 17 May 2023 (which was International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia), someone defaced my photo outside my office. At page 111 of Exhibit MD-1 is a photograph taken by one of my staffers at around that time. This was humiliating but also made me feel extremely unsafe. It occurred to me that whoever did this could watch me go in and out of the office; they could see me go to my car and follow me home. I became worried about my safety and the safety of my staff.
253. In October 2023, I attended a meeting in Scotland with two Scottish MPs: Pam Gosal, (MSP for West Scotland (Region)) and Rachael Hamilton (MSP for Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire Pam). We took photographs together but they said they didn't want them published until my name and reputation were cleared of association with Nazism. This was a humiliating and upsetting experience for me.
254. In November 2023, I was scheduled to speak at a community forum with a Local Government Councillor, Council Watch and local residents at a local Church Hall in Werribee. The Church was inundated with threats and complaints about my supposed Nazism and so the venue pulled out and the event had to be moved outdoors to a park.

Concerns Notices

255. Before commencing proceedings, I issued several concerns notices to Mr Pesutto.
256. I requested that he apologise to me. I was disappointed and hurt that he has refused to apologise to me. I thought this was improper and self-serving.
257. I was also furious that, in his responses to my concerns notices, Mr Pesutto, through his lawyers, sought to deny or downplay the impact of the Publications on me and my family. He claimed that my reputation has not suffered serious harm as a result of the Publications. I was very wounded by this. I thought there was no sign in Mr Pesutto's letters (via his solicitors) of any compassion or humanity. He was not expressing any sympathy, or taking any responsibility, for what he had done to me. I felt dehumanised. I felt that he was treating me like actual rubbish.

Handwritten signature in blue ink, likely 'C. D. G.'

Handwritten signature in blue ink, likely 'K. J. H.'

November 2023 Media Statements

258. On 20 November 2023, I posted a statement to Facebook and to Twitter (**November 2023 Statement**) in an attempt to explain why I felt I had no choice but to commence defamation proceedings against Mr Pesutto in an attempt to clear my name and restore my reputation (if possible). A copy of my November 2023 Statement as posted to Facebook is at page 112 of Exhibit MD-1 and a copy of my November 2023 Statement as posted to Twitter is at page 113 of Exhibit MD-1.
259. That same day, Mr Pesutto published his own statement in reply (**Mr Pesutto's November 2023 Statement**). A copy of Mr Pesutto's November 2023 Statement is at page 114 of Exhibit MD-1. I was furious when I saw Mr Pesutto's November 2023 Statement, especially at the following aspects:
- (a) He said my suspension and expulsion "were never about" my views "on women's issues". I thought this was disingenuous and false. I had always felt that the reasons he actually gave for my suspension and expulsion were just a pretext and that the true reason for my suspension and expulsion, which he engineered, was that he disagreed with my views "on women's issues". He always knew he had no grounds to associate me with Nazism [REDACTED].
 - (b) I thought it was disingenuous that he said he had never called me a neo-Nazi or Nazi sympathiser because he knew people had interpreted his statements to suggest I am a neo-Nazi or Nazi sympathiser.
 - (c) He said the issue had always been whether I called out or distanced myself from neo-Nazi protestors and references when asked to do so by senior Liberals. I was angry because I thought he knew this was false. He knew I had condemned the neo-Nazis.
 - (d) I found his totally unashamed and unabashed republication to the world at large of all these heinous accusations, which he knew were false, to be a total power imbalance. I was distressed and felt powerless.

Commencement of Proceedings

260. On 5 December 2023, I commenced these proceedings.
261. Throughout the events from 19 March 2023 leading up to my expulsion on 12 May 2023, one of the worst parts of the ordeal was that I felt I had no ability to defend myself publicly. I felt silenced and prevented from explaining my side of the story or speaking out publicly.

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Again and again, Mr Pesutto was making public comments about me, but I knew I would be criticised if I tried to contradict him by explaining that his statements were untrue. I was being advised by colleagues not to issue public statements but to try to resolve the situation with Mr Pesutto privately. I felt backed into a corner, and that commencing these proceedings was the only way I could publicly refute Mr Pesutto's claims against me and vindicate my reputation – for my sake and the sake of my children and family.

262. On 29 January 2024, Mr Pesutto filed his Defence to my Statement of Claim. I was distressed when I read it. I was angry that he still had not apologised to me even though he was admitting that each of the Publications was defamatory. Even if he didn't mean to defame me (which I don't accept), I didn't understand why he wouldn't now apologise to me when he was formally admitting he had defamed me. I was also frustrated and furious that in his Defence he denied that the Publications had caused serious harm to my reputation. Likewise, I was enraged when I saw that he was still trying to assert that the neo-Nazis had 'attended' the LWS Rally, when he must know this is false. I was upset that he seemed to me to have dug in his heels and still was refusing to accept he had got it wrong.

Ongoing Harm

263. I still feel under attack and in danger as a result of the Publications.
264. I commenced these proceedings to seek to restore my reputation, but the harm that my family and I are suffering is still ongoing.
265. In January 2024, I received private messages on Twitter from a person using the pseudonym 'RosieTheLolita', a copy of which are at pages 116 to 116 of Exhibit MD-1. The messages included messages calling me a Nazi. The messages included the following:
- (a) *"I hope your deformed and mentally ill kids got [sic] gang raped in front of you".*
- (b) *"Aren't you that fat nazi who friends with those people in March who performed the Nazi salute? Bitch you need to fucking kill yourself you fat retarded Christian pedo bitch. Eww".*
266. Each time I receive a message like this, it upsets and distresses me because I fear it will never end and the truth will never hold any weight because Mr Pesutto and his supporters refuse to undo what they have done to me.
267. On 2 February 2024, Mr Pesutto did an interview with Tom Elliott of 3AW Melbourne in which, amongst other things, he said: *"There was an outcome last year that, had it been*

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observed, would have seen [me] returned to the party room". This infuriated me. I regarded it as totally disingenuous and false, since he had himself reneged on the agreement which had been reached during the 27 March Meeting.

268. In February 2024, I provided a statement to the police, a copy of which is at pages 117 to 120 of Exhibit MD-1.

269. I had been planning to attend the "Women Will Speak" protest on 23 March 2024 but then I was advised through Parliamentary Services and by Victorian Police that, although police resources would be deployed to maintain public order at the protest, the police could not guarantee my safety. I was told verbally that it was very likely that it would be unsafe for me to attend. This renewed the sense of dread and fearfulness I have experienced since and as a result of the Publications.

270. There has been further publicity throughout the course of these proceedings which have hurt and upset me. For example:

(a) The Herald Sun published an article on 19 March 2024 entitled "*Opposition Leader John Pesutto accuses media of campaign against him*", which said that the Expulsion Motion and Dossier "*accused [me] of having Nazi links and 'conducting activities in a manner likely to bring discredit on the parliament or the Parliamentary Party.'*" These sorts of statements are incredibly upsetting for me because it is clear to me that large portions of the media and the public understood that Mr Pesutto was accusing me of being a Nazi or "having Nazi links", which of course is untrue.

(b) The Herald Sun published an article on 3 May 2024 entitled "*Victoria's biggest political scandals of the past decade*". The article stated that "*Victoria has witnessed no shortage of political scandals in the last decade*" and included my expulsion from the Victorian Parliamentary Liberal Party as amongst "*the biggest political scandals*". Like the article in the preceding subparagraph, this article stated that Mr Pesutto's "*accused [me] of having Nazi links*". Each time I read an article like this, it renews and increases my sense of anguish and hopelessness.

271. There are countless other examples.

272. I have noticed that articles about me often include tags such as "Extremism". I do not ever recall being labelled and tagged as an "extremist", or linked to "extremism", prior to the Publications. This is incredibly upsetting. For example, I observed that an article by The Age entitled "*Moira Deeming suffers blow in fight against expulsion from Liberals' party*

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room", published on 21 March 2023, includes an "Extremism" tag at the top of the page (as shown in the screen-shot at page 121 of Exhibit MD-1).

273. On 22 March 2024 when I Googled my name, one of the "Top stories" in response to that search was an article about notorious neo-Nazi Thomas Sewell (as shown in the screen-shot at page 122 of Exhibit MD-1, which I took on 22 March 2024).

274. [REDACTED]

(a) [REDACTED]

(b) [REDACTED]

(c) [REDACTED]

275. [REDACTED]

276. I have continued to suffer emotionally and physically as a result of the ordeal starting with and caused by Mr Pesutto's Publications. I have had to see doctors about various physical

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issues. For example, I have had terrible headaches (I had to have an MRI to check for any issues); I have been subconsciously clenching my jaw (for which I have had to have treatment including physiotherapy for my neck and shoulders and then dry needling in my jaw and face muscles); I have been subconsciously clenching my fists (more than once I woke with nail marks in my palms) and my toes (so that I have frequently had agonising foot spasms at the end of the day and at night); I have had disturbed sleep and am often tired; I have had irregular periods (mostly they disappeared but once I had two periods in one month which I was told by my doctors is a known catastrophic stress reaction in women).

277. The ongoing impact on me has been nightmarish. Over time I withdrew into myself, into a state of absolute loneliness and misery. I even stopped going to Church because I hated the idea of potentially crying in public and I was upset with God and was getting emotional during sermons and because I was so exhausted from having to explain myself to everyone, everywhere I went.

278. On the outside, I have always tried to ensure that nobody would see how broken I really am, because I find it excruciating not to have emotional privacy and am a private person. I have never been able to feel that my physical privacy is secure because of my past experiences, so emotional privacy has always been paramount to me and my very last line of defence. This whole saga – Mr Pesutto’s public attacks on me, followed by attacks on me by others, and the utter humiliation of having to tell people I’m not a Nazi – were all so public that they have been traumatic to me to an extent that I cannot properly explain in writing.

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




Signature of deponent



Signature of witness

Name and qualification of witness

Kieran Lucas Sheehan 

An Australian legal practitioner within the meaning
of the Legal Profession Uniform Law (Victoria)