

Kelly O'Dwyer disgusted by homophobic and racist texts sent by Victorian Liberal powerbrokers 1:29 December 20, 2018.

Liberal MP Kelly O'Dwyer says that she hopes the new President of the Victorian Liberal Party, Robert Clark will take a broom to the party as a scandal surrounding homophobic and racist text messages emerges. O'Dwyer says she is disgusted by the messages by former Victorian vice-president Marcus Bastiaan and steering committee chair Paul Mitchell in text and Facebook exchanges. (AAP VIDEO/Alex Murray)

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Kelly O'Dwyer quits federal politics in stunning move

Lanai Scarr, Senior Writer, News Corp Australia Network, January 19, 2019

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Federal Industrial Relations Minister Kelly O'Dwyer is quitting politics. The member for the Victorian seat of Higgins announced the shock move alongside Prime Minister Scott Morrison in her Melbourne electorate today. Ms O'Dwyer, 41, who serves in Cabinet as Minister for Industrial Relations and Jobs and also Minister for Women said she will continue on with her ministerial duties until the May election but will not re-contest her seat.

Her resignation is yet another blow for the Morrison government as it begins an election year.

In a statement and media conference today Ms O'Dwyer cited "personal reasons" for her shock move including the desire to try for a third child and spend more time with her children Olivia, 3.5, Edward, 20-months and also husband Jon, 43. She also said she and her husband want to have a third child, noting she is turning 42 and "everything needs to go right". "After much agonising and with a heavy heart, I am announcing that I will not recontest the next election," Ms O'Dwyer said. "The reasons are complex and the most compelling are deeply personal.

"I no longer want to consistently miss seeing my children get up in the morning or go to bed at night and I want to know that when I am around my time with them is not constantly disrupted."

OPINION: Kelly O'Dwyer's exit is a catastrophe for the PM



Kelly O'Dwyer and Scott Morrison exchanged a kiss on the cheek today as she announced her resignation. Picture:

Ms O'Dwyer said after close to a decade in Parliament she wants to give "someone else the opportunity to serve". She gave her thanks to former prime minister Malcolm Turnbull and Scott Morrison for the opportunity to serve in Cabinet.

"I would particularly like to thank the Prime Minister and Jenny for their personal support in what has been a very difficult decision. I have worked closely with Scott not just as PM but also as Treasurer," Ms O'Dwyer said. "He is the right person to lead our nation and I will do all that I can, both locally and nationally, to ensure that this continues."

At a press conference today, Ms O'Dwyer also said that she has a "great friendship" and "profound respect" for Mr Morrison. She said that there had been "too many by-elections of late" and she had no plans to start another one. "It's one [decision] that is right for me and my family," she said. "I need to be honest that I can not commit to another three years and continue to deliver

the quality of service that my country, my party and my community are entitled to expect.”

Ms O’Dwyer also said that while there might be some who will try and use her announcement to “advance their own agendas”, but she did not want that to occur.

“Like so many other families, our journey to parenthood has not been straightforward,” she said, adding that she and her husband want to give themselves the best opportunity to have a third child. “We need to be very realistic. I turned 42 this year and everything has to go right,” she said. “This does not mean men or women have to choose between family and public service.”

Mr Morrison told media at a press conference today that “family is so important”, and that he supported Ms O’Dwyer’s choice to leave politics. He said that being able to choose shows “great strength” and said “no one in Parliament has worked harder” on issues that women face.

When asked about Ms O’Dwyer’s replacement, she said there was plenty of talent within the Liberal Party and she hoped it would be another woman.

Mr Morrison did not want to speculate on who the candidate might be.

Ms O’Dwyer, a prodigy of former treasurer Peter Costello, has served in the inner-Melbourne seat of Higgins since 2009 when she won a by-election after Peter Costello’s retirement.

The former lawyer and finance industry professional holds the seat with a 10.2 per cent margin. News of her retirement was a shock to all in the party and her staff with only a handful of people knowing her plans prior to today’s announcement. Her moves come after a tumultuous 2018 for the Liberal party, which saw a leadership change and allegations of bullying and intimidation particularly of females within the party.

It also follows the resignation of fellow Liberal MP and Victorian Julia Banks who in November moved to the cross bench.

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