



## VICTORIAN LIBERALS IN BID TO SAVE MENZIES MP KEVIN ANDREWS

Kieran Rooney, Herald Sun March 11, 2020 Kevin Andrews.

Picture: Jason Edwards

A bitter internal battle within the Liberal Party over control of the federal seat of Menzies has boiled to the surface with a group of Victorian Liberals staging a last-minute bid to save veteran federal MP Kevin Andrews.

A group of Victorian Liberals has staged a last-minute bid to save veteran federal [MP Kevin Andrews](#) by demanding an urgent intervention into pre-selection for the seat of Menzies. Simmering factional tensions over control of the federal eastern suburbs seat have boiled to the surface; with speculation mounting the former immigration minister is set to be replaced by barrister and former army officer Keith Wolahan.

The early pre--selection, at least two years before the next election and the only challenge to a sitting MP, has provoked a [bitter internal battle within the Liberals over the past two months](#). Supporters of Mr Andrews last month revoked their plans to call a crisis meeting over the issue and an official vote was set to be carried out last week.

But Andrew Asten, chairman of the Menzies FEC executive committee, last night wrote to the party's state director Sam McQuestin and federal director Andrew Hirst calling for an urgent investigation. Mr Asten, an ally of Mr Andrews, said there were serious questions over the draw which determined which members of the Liberals' State Council attended the pre-selection vote.

Two draws were held on February 4 and 6 but opposition was raised that some members were left out of the process. He wrote that later attempts to correct these flaws had meant the pre-selection vote was likely to favour one candidate over the other. "It is worth noting that members of the Constitutional Committee who were Menzies FEC members, and had close personal associations to one of the candidates failed to excuse themselves from these decisions," he said.

In his letter, Mr Asten also claimed that a scrutineer may have broken party rules and recorded audio from one of the meetings and that some delegates included in the process, including three state MPs, were ineligible to be involved. "We request an urgent independent assessment of the pre-selection process be carried out," he wrote. "Without such an independent assessment, the concerns of many local members are sufficiently strongly held that the pre-selection results run the risk of being considered tainted, and/or open to challenge."

But the move has fuelled backlash within the Liberal Party amid fears that well-placed supporters are still working to protect Mr Andrews from being ousted in a vote. It comes after three prime ministers and every federal Liberal minister from Victoria raced to endorse him over his challenger in January. A brochure handed out to party members featured support from John Howard, Tony Abbott and Prime Minister Scott Morrison. If elected it would be Mr Andrews' 11th consecutive term since taking over the seat in 1991.

<https://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/victoria/victorian-liberals-in-bid-to-save-menzies-mp-kevin-andrews/news-story/9b37bbb6b2a4326f3c027fef7bf3fd75>