

Labor MP Emma Husar takes personal leave as party investigates conduct towards staff

Written by Michelle Grattan, Professorial Fellow, University of Canberra

Labor's member for the NSW marginal seat of Lindsay, Emma Husar, has announced she is taking personal leave, after a long-running party investigation into allegations she misused and bullied staff members became public.

Husar said in a statement that she had received threats of violence.

The NSW Labor party probe, led by barrister John Whelan, into the claims against Husar, who is in her first term, has been going on for some time but the story only broke publicly with a [Buz zFeed report](#) last week.

Opposition leader Bill Shorten has said he first heard of the allegations last week.

They include that Husar had members of her staff perform baby sitting and dog walking chores, and that she had been abusive towards staff. Her office has had a big turnover. There has been speculation that she could lose preselection if the investigation finds against her.

In her statement late Tuesday Husar said: "The past few days have been incredibly difficult for my family. I'm a single mum and my first priority is the safety and wellbeing of my children.

"I have received threatening messages including threats of violence and have referred them to the Australian Federal Police.

"The best thing for me and my family right now is for us to be out of the spotlight so I can access support.

"I look forward to returning to my duties as the Member for Lindsay very soon. I love my community and there is no higher honour for me than representing the people of Western

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Sydney in Australia's parliament.

"As I said last week, I respect and am co-operating with the independent process that is underway".

Shorten said on Tuesday Husar had "been a hard-working member in her electorate" but he didn't want to further comment until the inquiry was finished.

Shadow treasurer Chris Bowen said: "I've always found her very passionate about Western Sydney, about the issues she cares about deeply, and entirely professional, but these serious matters should be dealt with through that independent investigation."

Labor frontbencher Mike Kelly defended Husar, saying the use of staff members for some personal help was "a small price to pay for having a truly representative democracy and facilitating the ability of women to participate in our parliament."

"You've got a hard-working young woman here, a single mother with three kids, having to juggle a very tough electorate in Lindsay with a lot of diverse issues and then of course do the commute to Canberra," he told Sky.

Recently former deputy prime minister Barnaby Joyce took a stint of personal leave after a furore over his paid TV interview about his affair with his former staffer and now partner Vikki Campion, with whom he has a baby.

Michelle Grattan does not work for, consult, own shares in or receive funding from any company or organisation that would benefit from this article, and has disclosed no relevant affiliations beyond their academic appointment.

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