

Lidia Thorpe's relationship with ex-bikie should have been declared to law enforcement committee, Labor says



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**Highlight:** Parliamentary committee has processes to declare any potential conflicts of interest, then deputy chair [Anne Aly](#) says Follow our [Australia](#) news live blog for the latest updates Get our morning and afternoon news emails, free app or daily news podcast

### Body

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The Greens senator Lidia Thorpe's failure to declare a possible perceived conflict of interest in her relationship with a former bikie is "disappointing", according to the then deputy chair of parliament's law enforcement committee.

[Anne Aly](#), now the minister for early childhood education, made the comment to Guardian [Australia](#) after the Greens leader, Adam Bandt, [asked for and received Thorpe's resignation as Greens deputy leader in the Senate](#) over the undisclosed relationship with Dean Martin in 2021.

Martin, who has no criminal convictions, was associated with the Rebels bikie gang but stepped down as Victorian chapter president in 2018 after his brother Shane Martin – the father of AFL star Dustin Martin – was deported to New Zealand.

Thorpe was a member of the joint committee on law enforcement from February 2021 to April 2022.

In August 2021, the committee concluded a review of an amendment to reinforce the legality of the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission's powers to conduct special operations and investigations.

The ACIC has coercive powers to investigate serious criminal activities. In July 2020 it established a special operation on outlaw motorcycle gangs.

In its [report](#), the committee noted the ACIC had offered to provide detail on "the importance of evidence obtained through its exercise of coercive powers in tackling serious and organised crime", including "in camera" in a private session.

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Guardian [Australia](#) does not suggest that Thorpe shared any confidential information with any person not authorised to receive it.

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Aly told Guardian [Australia](#) "accountability and transparency are the responsibility of all members of parliament". "The committee has significant processes in place for members to declare all conflicts of interest – it's disappointing to learn a member may not have taken this responsibility to the Australian community seriously.

"Adam Bandt needs to explain what his office knew and what he knew, and if he wasn't informed about these issues, given his office was, why that is the case."

In a statement, Thorpe said she accepts she "made mistakes" and had "not exercised good judgment".

Thorpe told the ABC, [which first revealed the relationship](#), she met Martin "through Blak activism and briefly dated in early 2021".

"We remain friends and have collaborated on our shared interests advocating for the rights of First Nations peoples."

Thorpe acknowledged she did not advise Bandt of her relationship with Martin, but insisted that confidential committee documents on how the AFP monitors outlaw motorcycle gangs were "treated in confidence".

Thorpe said Martin's history with the Rebels was a "past connection".

"Obviously, I'm concerned about the criminal activities of outlaw motorcycle clubs in general. But when we met, Mr Martin was no longer involved with that world."

Martin reportedly made a ["peaceful handover"](#) of the Rebels presidency in April 2018. The club is considered to have the most members of any outlaw motorcycle gang in [Australia](#).

He [previously advocated](#) for the overhaul of deportation laws that had resulted in his brother Shane being exiled to New Zealand, telling the Age in 2016 that the then immigration minister Peter Dutton was victimising all club members. "He's saying we're all criminals, drug dealers. "None of us here have got criminal records and he's slandering us all the time. "He's accusing us; he's chopping us off at the head, he reckons." Martin referenced the Aboriginal mother of his five children during his protest against deportation laws, saying: "My kids are Indigenous – their mum's Aboriginal – and it's like stolen generations all over again."

In 2013 he reportedly [faced charges](#) relating to a raid on the Rebels clubhouse in Melbourne's west, after police seized alcohol on the premises.

He pleaded guilty to charges of selling liquor without a licence and dealing with \$76.45 suspected of being the proceeds of crime.

His lawyer told the Melbourne magistrates court Martin had not been at the clubhouse for four months prior to the raid as he was working interstate as a security manager for a construction company, but as president he was responsible for the breaches of the law.

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