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# Essendon CEO Andrew Thorburn quits job after only one day

Having given up his post after just one day as Essendon's new CEO, Andrew Thorburn left the club with a withering parting shot.

James McKern

 3 min read October 5, 2022 - 11:48AM

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Essendon CEO Andrew Thorburn has quit his role after only one day in the job.

Thorburn's hiring was met with widespread backlash after the views of his church were thrust into the spotlight.

[Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews torched the Essendon Football Club](#) over its appointment of Thorburn.

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Thorburn, 57, is chairman of the City on a Hill church, which has previously condemned homosexuality and holds divisive views around abortion.

Almost a day after being announced as the man in charge, Thorburn had officially stepped down to keep his role as chairman of the church.

"The Board of the Essendon Football Club has accepted the resignation of Andrew Thorburn as CEO," a club statement read.

"As soon as the comments relating to a 2013 sermon from a pastor, at the City of the Hill church came to light this morning, we acted immediately to clarify the publicly espoused views on the organisation's official website, which are in direct contradiction to our values as a Club.

"The Board made clear that, despite these not being views that Andrew Thorburn has expressed personally and that were also made prior to him taking up his role as Chairman, he couldn't continue to serve in his dual roles at the Essendon Football Club and as Chairman of City on the Hill.

"The Board respects Andrew's decision."

Essendon... [pic.twitter.com/a7jZO3aLsf](https://pic.twitter.com/a7jZO3aLsf)

— Tim Michell (@tim\_michell) October 4, 2022

Thorburn released a statement shortly after the news of his departure became public, blaming today's culture for not accepting his faith and ultimately costing him the role.

"Yesterday was one of the proudest days of my life. To be offered the role of CEO of the Essendon Football Club - who I have followed since I was a boy - was a profound honour," Thorburn wrote.

"However, today it became clear to me that my personal Christian faith is not tolerated or permitted in the public square, at least by some and perhaps by many. I was being required to compromise beyond a level that my conscience allowed. People should be able to hold different views on complex personal and moral matters, and be able to live and work together, even with those differences, and always with respect. Behaviour is the key. This is all an important part of a tolerant and diverse society.

"Despite my own leadership record, within hours of my appointment being announced, the media and leaders of our community had spoken. They made it clear that my Christian faith and my association with a Church are unacceptable in our culture if you wish to hold a leadership position in society.

"This grieves me greatly - though not just for myself, but for our society overall. I believe we are poorer for the loss of our great freedoms of thought, conscience and belief that made for a truly diverse, just and respectful community.

"I am saddened by these events. I wish the Club success, and thank Dave Barham in particular for the opportunity he gave me. I hope the external review leads to great change. I am truly sorry that I will not be able to work with the whole Essendon team, and Brad Scott and Josh Mahoney in particular."

While the decision to appoint Brad Scott as coach was, in my view, a good one, the decision to appoint Andrew Thorburn as CEO is spitting in the face of every queer Essendon member, as well as any member or supporter who supports womens rights to reproductive healthcare.

— Deputy Mayor Tim Baxter 德Y³i,â€ŸŸœ^ (@BaxterTim) October 3, 2022

The 57-year-old former NAB chief executive defended the church on Tuesday, adamant "different views" should be respected in the community while also pointing out he didn't share all of his church's beliefs.

The church has an article on its website from 2013 titled 'Surviving Same Sex Attraction as a Christian'

...reaction as a Christian.

Thornburn distanced himself from those views and said he anticipated the public backlash after “little firestorms” surrounding his faith in his previous jobs.

In response to the revelations, Thornburn said it was “very important” his church’s strong views on abortion and homosexuality were allowed to be expressed in Australian society but called for the Bombers to judge him solely on his leadership and not his faith.

Daniel Andrews, an Essendon supporter, said the decision to appoint a chief executive ultimately rested with the club’s board and he would continue to be a club member.

But he also said there were “many reasons to be a somewhat disappointed Essendon supporter”.

“Those views are absolutely appalling. I don’t support those views, that kind of intolerance, that kind of hatred, bigotry. It is just wrong,” Andrews said.

“To dress that up as anything other than bigotry is just obviously false.”

[Essendon has lurched from one disaster to the next on and off the field](#) this year with the club at breaking point following board member and club icon Kevin Sheedy’s extraordinary decision to slam his own club for last week appointing Brad Scott as its new senior coach, overlooking club legend James Hird.

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