

Rogue NSW Liberal MP punished for crossing the floor

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Alexandra Smith

Outspoken NSW Liberals MP Matthew Mason-Cox has been punished for his decision to cross the floor of Parliament and has been stripped of his position as chairman of a powerful committee.

Mr Mason-Cox was last week sacked as chairman of the upper house privileges committee, a position that attracts about an extra \$20,000 a year. It is understood he will also be removed as deputy chairman of the newly formed public accountability committee.



Matthew Mason-Cox has been stripped of his position as chairman of a powerful committee. Photo: Daniel Munoz

Mr Mason-Cox [embarrassed his Liberal Party colleagues in April](#) when he refused to vote with the government and took the unprecedented step of crossing the floor.

His actions allowed the Greens to successfully move a motion forcing the government to be compelled to release the full business case for the relocation of the Powerhouse Museum.

The government was required to release the business case last Thursday, but the critical documents were not produced because the government said they did not exist.

Just days later, the [Premier Gladys Berejiklian announced that Australia's largest planetarium would be built in Parramatta](#) and there would be a new Broadway-style theatre and fashion and design museum in Ultimo.

The new, purpose-built museum in western Sydney would be the largest in NSW and a rival to the London Science Museum and the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum.



An artist's impression of the new Powerhouse museum to be built in Parramatta.

The overall cost of building, operating and moving the Powerhouse Museum to western Sydney will top \$1 billion but there are no plans to demolish the heritage-listed Ultimo site.

But the Arts Minister Don Harwin has not ruled out selling the airspace rights or a partial sale and residential redevelopment on the 2.6-hectare site along Harris Street.

Mr Mason-Cox, who has also been a vocal opponent of the government's stadiums policy, said the state government had developed a "perverse culture of secrecy".

Before the final decision was made on the Powerhouse relocation, Mr Mason-Cox said it was another case where the government had failed "to do its homework".

But Mr Mason Cox, who was chairman of the privileges committee for almost three years, said he accepted the Premier's decision to remove him from the position.

"This was a result of me exercising my conscience and I accept that," Mr Mason-Cox said.

There had been suggestions that Mr Mason-Cox could be suspended from the Liberal Party room when it meets on Tuesday ahead of a parliamentary sitting week.

One senior Liberal source said: "Ultimately Matthew is still a conservative member of parliament but the reality is we can never be sure now what he will do on

controversial issues. There is no doubt that this could be an issue for us in the next year."

Recent comments

- Rutherford
Matthew Mason-Cox has integrity and I praise him for this. As for the rest of the sheep; Pity you weren't all lemmings as we all know what they do (at least according to the saying). Now what we need is a whistle-blower who can leak the original business plan for the Powerhouse Museum. Unfortunately, the effect on their lives would be disastrous.
- Bangor1
This demonstrates the utter contempt in which Backflip Berejiklian and her cronies hold the voters of NSW. We should remember this on March 23rd next year.

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/nsw/rogue-nsw-liberal-mp-punished-for-crossing-the-floor-20180430-p4zciy.html>