

# Liberals move to suspend former MP Ross Cameron for criticising party

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Outspoken former MP Ross Cameron faces being suspended from the Liberal party for five years, following a television interview in which he savaged Treasurer Gladys Berejiklian.

In an interview with Sky News last month, Mr Cameron accused the Treasurer of sabotaging the party's prospects of democratic reform, because she was either committed to authoritarian rule or manoeuvring to replace Mike Baird as premier.



Factional turmoil in NSW Liberals

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Mr Cameron made the comments shortly before the state Liberal party plebiscite issue was due to be debated by the NSW state council.

The NSW Liberal party executive voted on Friday night to give Mr Cameron 28 days to show cause why he should not be suspended from the party, which forbids members from discussing party matters with the media.

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A defender of Mr Cameron argued he should not be suspended on the grounds that nobody had seen the offending footage because it was on Sky News.

"How can you breach him for breaking the media rules when no one watches Sky News?" the defender said.

"You can't call it media."

Mr Cameron is prominent among a group of right faction MPs agitating to change the way candidates are preselected to give all branch members a vote, while the left and centre-right factions argue that such a system would lead to branch stacking.



*Outspoken former MP Ross Cameron faces being suspended from the Liberal party for five years. Photo: Adam Hollingworth*

Ms Berejiklian is a member of the dominant left faction.

Mr Cameron told Sky Television he was "fully dirty with Gladys Berejiklian".

"Now I'm saying that if Gladys Berejiklian wants to destroy democratic reform, either because that's her genuine personal view that she wants to retain an authoritarian party or because she thinks that she will be able to replace Mike Baird with the benefit of factional numbers in a secret backroom deal ... we are at risk of tearing ourselves apart."

The right wing push for a plebiscite is the single most divisive issue facing the Liberal party after the Abbott/Turnbull loyalty split.



*Treasurer Gladys Berejiklian announces half-yearly budget forecast at the Four Seasons Hotel in Sydney. Photo: Ben Rushton*

Mr Cameron also singled out federal MPs Marise Payne, Trent Zimmerman, Julian Leeser and Jason Falinski for standing in the way of the plebiscite.

He said on Saturday that he stood by his comments and would fight the suspension, on the grounds that such a move was contradictory to democracy.

"An organisation that expels people for telling the truth has got a limited life expectancy," he said.

"I don't try to calibrate my remarks around the vicissitudes of the ruling members of the party.

"I call it as I see it."

<http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/liberals-move-to-suspend-former-mp-ross-cameron-for-criticising-party-20161217-gtodbk1.html>