

# Troy Grant resigns: What's going on inside the NSW Nationals?

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PHOTO: [Troy Grant \(C\) and Premier Mike Baird \(R\) at a meeting in July.](#) (AAP: Dean Lewins)

**The result of the Orange by-election is unlikely to be clear until later this week, but the political recriminations for the Nationals' poor showing have already begun.**

Deputy Premier Troy Grant [announced his resignation this afternoon](#), meaning a leadership ballot will be held when the party meets tomorrow morning.

They had held the seat by a margin of more than 21 per cent, but with swings of around 60 per cent in some booths, the Nationals could lose the seat for the first time in decades.

Nationals candidate Scott Barrett is in a tight tussle with the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party's Philip Donato.

## Why is Troy Grant stepping down?

Unrest in the Nationals' partyroom had been mounting for months.

MPs were furious they were not consulted before their leader, Mr Grant, stood up with Premier Mike Baird to announce the greyhound racing ban in July.

It cemented a view in some parts of the party that Mr Grant was not listening to his MPs, who had relayed their constituents' views on the ban, and other unpopular policies, like council amalgamations.

It also fuelled perceptions Mr Grant was too close to Mr Baird and unwilling to stand up to him.

Speculation Mr Grant would be challenged for the leadership reached fever pitch in October as the Government ploughed ahead with the greyhound racing ban in the lead-up to the Orange by-election, despite warnings the party would be obliterated at the ballot box.



PHOTO: [NSW Premier Mike Baird \(R\) and Deputy Premier Troy Grant.](#)  
(AAP: David Moir)

Nationals MPs on solid margins started looking at uncomfortable internal polling and panicking about their political futures.

The last-minute decision to reverse the policy gave Mr Grant a reprieve.

For a moment, it appeared his leadership was safe, with internal polling showing the Nationals would hold the seat of Orange in the by-election, albeit with a significantly reduced majority.

But Saturday's devastating result [sparked finger pointing.](#)

## How will the vote work?

When the Nationals meet for their partyroom meeting tomorrow morning, the leadership positions will be declared vacant and MPs who want the jobs will declare they are standing.

A vote will take place to decide who will be the leader and deputy leader of the NSW Nationals.

Even if Mr Grant had not resigned, Coffs Harbour Nationals MP Andrew Fraser had flagged that he would move a motion for a spill of both leadership positions.



PHOTO: [Shooters candidate Philip Donato was all smiles yesterday.](#) (ABC News: Joanna Woodburn)

## Who is the most likely to get the top job?

Skills Minister John Barilaro is the frontrunner to take over from Mr Grant.

Clarence MP Chris Gulaptis has said he would back Mr Barilaro, while several other MPs have told the ABC they would support him.

It was initially thought local government Minister Paul Toole would run for the top job, but he told the ABC on Monday afternoon he would not run for leader but had not ruled out running as deputy.

Lands Minister Niall Blair may also be an option, but his position in the Upper House makes it more likely he could be made deputy instead.

## What does this mean for Mike Baird?

The Nationals' situation is a major headache for Mr Baird and his Government.

Disunity is death in politics, and the leadership change is a major distraction for the Coalition. The Premier will now be forced to reshuffle Cabinet.



PHOTO: [Save our Councils NSW campaigners hold signs saying "put the Nats last"](#). (Facebook: Philip Donato)