

THE AUSTRALIAN

Second chance for Labor's Cameron Dick

12/6/19

By **MICHAEL MCKENNA**
THE AUSTRALIAN
11:00PM MARCH 25, 2012

DUMPED education minister Cameron Dick is the frontrunner to contest Anna Bligh's seat of South Brisbane, after the defeated Queensland premier quit politics following the landslide election loss that ousted the next generation of Labor leadership aspirants from parliament.

The defeat has left Queensland Labor without an obvious leader and dependent on premier-elect Campbell Newman to grant the party status needed to qualify for opposition office funding, after it failed to meet the required threshold of 10 MPs in parliament.

With votes still being counted, Labor was hoping to have a caucus of eight -- after going to the election with 51 of the 89 seats in parliament -- with slight leads in the Brisbane seat of Bulimba and central Queensland seat of Mackay, which some insiders were predicting could be lost on pre-poll votes.

Labor lost a swag of heartland seats, including Cairns, which it has held for more than a century, and can only call five seats -- Bundamba, Inala, Woodridge, South Brisbane and Rockhampton -- as definite wins.

Breaking her campaign promise to serve out the next term regardless of the election outcome, Ms Bligh said she was quitting because she believed Labor could not rebuild with her in parliament given the "loudness and clarity of the message" delivered by voters at the weekend poll.

The former premier said yesterday she believed Queensland Labor had to rebuild without her. "Queenslanders very decisively yesterday closed the chapter on Anna Bligh's era in Queensland politics," she said with her husband, Greg Withers, by her side.

"Queenslanders sent a very strong message that they want not only a change of government but they want a change of the political face in Queensland parliament.

"I don't think Labor can effectively rebuild and present a new face while I am still sitting there."

Mr Dick, elevated to cabinet in his first term after the 2009 election, was ousted from his seat of Greenslopes in the Liberal National Party rout, and is being urged to contest the by-election in Ms Bligh's neighbouring seat, which the Labor premier barely won despite a margin of 15.1 per cent going in to the campaign.

Mr Dick could not be reached for comment.



The risky by-election plan for Mr Dick, a member of the party's Australian Workers Union Right faction, could be sabotaged by moves to recruit ousted MP Grace Grace, a member of the Unity faction who lost her bid to retain the seat of Brisbane Central, to stand for pre-selection for South Brisbane. The left and centre unity factions are understood to be backing Ms Grace and are intending to push for the sackings of ALP state secretary Anthony Chisholm and his deputy Jackie Traad.