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Gladys set to revamp team

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‘The Sauce’, Linda Simalis

BETS are under way on who will be dumped — and promoted — when Premier Gladys Berejiklian finally conducts her long-awaited Cabinet reshuffle to create the team to take the Coalition to the next State election.

However, ministers are still divided on whether the Premier herself will be leading the team come 2023 while there is also speculation if veteran Liberal minister Brad Hazzard will close the door on an impressive 30-year state political career.

While one Macquarie Street source claimed the reshuffle was “imminent”, the majority of ministers believe the end of March made the most sense given it would be after Budget Estimates.

One minister is putting money on the days after March 26, the 10-year anniversary of the NSW Coalition’s election victory.

“If you have a look at the sitting calendar, the month of April is free to allow the newbies to get on top of their new ministries,” the Minister said. As for who will stay or go, most believe the Premier will formally dump sidelined Sports, Multiculturalism and Veterans minister John Sidoti to create a vacancy. Sidoti, has been under investigation over his property interests by the NSW Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) since September 2019, with no sign of an outcome.

While Hazzard is keeping tight-lipped on his future, some of his colleagues believe the Health Minister may choose to retire after having successfully navigated the State through hopefully the worst of an unprecedented global pandemic.

The Sauce understands a member of the Premier’s left faction has been sounding out several possible replacements, with Planning Minister Rob Stokes and Customer Service Minister Victor Dominello among those named.

Both are deemed solid-performers to take on what will remain a challenging round for some time yet.

Several ministers have also been sounded out for the role of transport, leaving questions over where Bega MP Andrew Constance is headed. It is believed one of the Premier’s most loyal lieutenants, Police Minister David Elliott, will stay put along with Treasurer Dominic Perrottet.

Among those that may be moved include Local Government Minister Shelley Hancock, Arts Minister Don Harwin and Lower House Speaker Jonathan O’Dea.

As for who will be promoted, Mark Coure and Alister Henskens are deemed frontrunners for a ministry. It is understood both MPs are scheduled to undergo media training. The reshuffle chatter comes amid ongoing speculation as to whether the Premier herself will stick it out for a full-term, especially with ICAC yet to release its report into her former lover Daryl Maguire.

Ms Berejiklian has so far declared she intends to stay. But then former long-serving Labor leader Bob Carr told reporters repeatedly he wouldn’t be quitting — until the day he did.