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Under God or with the Bhagavad Gita, Minns' interim ministry swears in (28 March)

Long time for Labor but they swear they'll avoid the snags (29 March)

Michael Koziol

National NSW NSW Votes

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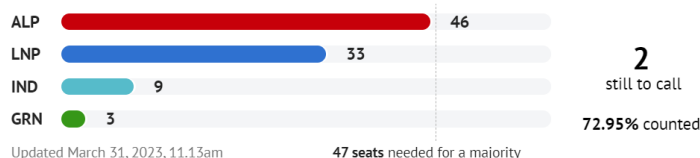
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One by one, under the immortalised gaze of Queen Mary, the grandmother of Queen Elizabeth II, they rose to take the oath. Some swore under God, others not – one, for the first time, clutched the Bhagavad Gita, a holy Hindu scripture.

The last time a Labor government was sworn into office inside NSW Government House was 2007, with Marie Bashir presiding and Morris Iemma signing his name. In an early sign of the disastrous fourth term to come, the ceremony was overshadowed by Iemma dumping a would-be minister on the day he was due for promotion after allegations against him were referred to police.

There were no such snags for Premier Chris Minns on Tuesday, although his chances of winning a lower house majority were receding with each passing minute. Watched by wife Anna, the 43-year-old pledged his allegiance under God to Australia and the people of NSW, and swore – as they all did – to perform his duties faithfully and to the best of his abilities.

Having just endured the ordeal of an election campaign, they probably didn't need reminding, but NSW Governor Margaret Beazley emphasised how hard Minns' team had worked to make it to the highest offices in the state.

All politicians were prodigious workers, she said. "We as a community need to acknowledge that, and we are very grateful for it." It was, she told them, a unique moment in their lives – and they should savour it before the really hard work began.

Beazley also said she was a very strong proponent of compulsory voting, which gave the incoming government the imprimatur of the whole state.

Environment and Heritage Minister Penny Sharpe, in her 18th year in the upper house, became the first lesbian to be sworn into the NSW cabinet, watched proudly by her partner Jo Tilly.

Treasurer and Minister for the Gig Economy, Daniel Mookhey, became the first person sworn in on the Bhagavad Gita, and was joined by wife Tamsin Lloyd, who is Tanya Plibersek's communications director.

Other ministers sworn into the interim cabinet were Deputy Premier and Education Minister Prue Car, Transport Minister Jo Haylen, Health Minister Ryan Park and Special Minister of State John Graham. All were new to the experience; the only person who had ever been sworn into a ministry before was former party leader Michael Daley, the attorney-general.

On conclusion of the formalities, Beazley said it was "truly an auspicious occasion", and implored the new ministers to reacquaint themselves with the NSW Constitution – particularly section two, which recognises Aboriginal people, and section five, which empowers them to make laws for the "peace, welfare and good government" of the state.

Making brief comments to reporters outside, the 47th premier acknowledged votes were still being counted and said his cabinet knew there was a huge responsibility on their shoulders. "We don't know the final composition of the next parliament, but my team and I are ready to hit the ground running, and we can't wait for those responsibilities of office," Minns said.

The full Minns ministry will be selected in the coming days.



LABOR'S INTERIM MINISTRY TEAM

1. PRUE CAR

MINISTER FOR EDUCATION Before joining parliament, Car worked as the national communications manager for Multiple Sclerosis Australia and was also an adviser to former premier Bob Carr. Born and raised in western Sydney, she has been the member for Londonderry since 2015.

2. JOHN GRAHAM

SPECIAL MINISTER OF STATE ROADS ARTS NIGHT TIME ECONOMY Having grown up in government housing in Albury, Graham worked in higher education and was a deputy chief of staff to former premier Nathan Rees before joining parliament. Was a vocal critic of the previous government's lockout laws.

3. DANIEL MOOKHEY

TREASURER The son of migrants from Punjab in northern India, Mookhey was born and raised in Sydney's west and was a lawyer for the Transport Workers Union before joining parliament. Earned credit from Labor colleagues for his role in uncovering Coalition party scandals including the Barilaro trade saga.

4. JO HAYLEN

MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT As a student at Willoughby Girls High School, a 15-year-old Haylen organised an anti-racism rally in the CBD in response to Pauline Hanson's maiden speech to parliament. Worked for future prime ministers Anthony Albanese and Julia Gillard before being elected as member for Summer Hill in the 2015 election.

5. PENNY SHARPE

MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT In parliament since 2005, Sharpe has previously held shadow ministries in transport, family and community services. She has three children and was the first openly gay woman to take a seat in the NSW Parliament.

6. RYAN PARK

MINISTER FOR HEALTH A former PE teacher in the Illawarra who worked as a curriculum adviser at the Department of Education. He was also chief of staff to former Labor MP and transport minister David Campbell and deputy director general for Transport NSW. His time in parliament has included a stint as shadow treasurer.

7. MICHAEL DALEY

ATTORNEY-GENERAL Having held the seat of Maroubra since 2005, Daley is the equal-most senior member of the ministry and the only one with cabinet experience. He briefly held the Labor leadership until defeat at the 2019 NSW election and challenged Minns to the leadership again in 2021 without success.

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