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OPINION

A very Labor wedding: Advisers to Tony Burke and Chris Bowen tie the knot



John Buckley CBD columnist; **September 21, 2026** — 5:00am

Well, it turns out there is a new power couple in Canberra we weren't even aware of. And over the weekend, they tied the knot.

Peter Green and **Suze Metherell** are variously described as two of the most competent advisers in Parliament House, and they just so happen to work for two factional overlords of the NSW Labor Right faction. Green is media chief for Home Affairs Minister **Tony Burke**, and Metherell is Climate Change and Energy Minister **Chris Bowen's** media director.



Minister for Climate Change Chris Bowen and Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations Tony Burke.ALEX ELLINGHAUSEN

The couple also has deep ties to media. Green's father is **Jonathan Green**, a prominent journalist who spent some 15 years at *The Age* and is a presenter on ABC Radio National.

Metherell's father, **Mark Metherell**, was a health reporter in the press gallery for *The Sydney Morning Herald*, while her mother, **Gia Metherell**, was literary editor of *The Canberra Times*. Metherell's sister was also a journalist at the ABC, while Suze herself was previously a reporter with AAP before crossing to the dark side.

Of course, the pair aren't the first to find love in Canberra, and they didn't have to look far for inspiration. Burke himself married former staffer **Skye Laris** in 2015, and we hear made himself available to attend the intimate wedding on Saturday.

Bowen also went along, CBD hears, along with clutch of senior staff, including his chief of staff **Andrew Garrett**, some folks from the Prime Minister's Office and a trickle of former staffers.

Among them were **Jacqui Woods** and **Georgia Tkachuck**, who work as senior advisers in the Prime Minister's Office, along with **Rosie Ryan**, assistant national secretary at the Australian Labor Party.

The formers, we're told, were also well represented: **Liz Fitch**, who used to run Prime Minister Anthony **Albanese's** media operation and now heads government affairs at Microsoft, was there, as was **Lachlan McKenzie**, another former Albanese adviser now working in government relations at Macquarie, and **Stela Todorovic**, another of the PM's former press secretaries who decamped to PsiQuantum last year.

A big congratulations to the happy couple.

Reputation fixing

There has been no shortage of controversy surrounding the Powerhouse Parramatta over the past few weeks after the museum's chief executive **Lisa Havilah** stepped down pending the outcome of an investigation into "governance and procurement practices".

So we can't imagine **Sarah Smith**, the museum's new head of communications, has been having much fun in her first weeks in the job.



(From left) Outgoing Powerhouse Parramatta boss Lisa Havilah; newly appointed interim chief executive Abbie Galvin; strategic adviser Louise Herron. THE SYDNEY MORNING HERALD

Just this month, the *Herald* revealed the Minns government is mulling a possible sale of the 125-year-old Harwood Building, which houses Powerhouse Museum offices and workshops next door to its Ultimo site amid budget blow-outs.

Then there's the newly installed museum leadership team of interim chief **Abbie Galvin** and strategic adviser **Louise Herron** for Smith to get to know, and the mounting political and media scrutiny being directed at the museum. All of this just weeks out from ribbon-cutting, which is what we'd guess they'd rather be focused on.

The unfortunate timing may be clear, but the changes on the team trying to manage the museum's reputation, and who has made them, are less so.

It's not beyond the realms of possibility to think Havilah may have been involved in Smith's recruitment given the timing of the former's departure (even if it only turns out to be temporary) and the latter's arrival.

Perhaps, we wondered, the pair bonded over reality TV. In a 2016 interview with *The Australian Financial Review* magazine, Havilah said she likes to watch some "bad reality TV" when she isn't working. She is (or at least was) a fan of *The Bachelor*, *Bachelorette* and *Keeping Up With the Kardashians*. Smith, meanwhile, has previously run reality publicity at Endomol Shine, of *Married at First Sight* and *LEGO Masters* fame, and has also consulted on *The Voice*.

The museum has previously also had a director of communications, but the last person to do that job, at least as far as we're aware, was **Michelle Lollo**, who left for a job at Destination NSW in May this year after serving as director in an "acting" capacity for about 10 months.

We tried asking Smith whether Havilah did in fact recruit her, and who has filled Lollo's role following her departure, along with whom she reports to. But she declined to comment. Instead, she said "movements and appointments" are commonplace at any organisation, and that the Powerhouse did not comment on "individual recruitment processes or internal staffing matters".