

Allan to take new-look cabinet to November election as reshuffle looms

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Premier Jacinta Allan will take a new-look cabinet to November's election, with Labor MPs expected to vote on the replacement of several ministers at a meeting on Tuesday.

On Thursday, MPs were being told to be ready for a meeting on Tuesday, with the expectation that there would be a vote on cabinet vacancies.



Jacinta Allan has told MPs to prepare for a cabinet reshuffle next week. WAYNE TAYLOR

[Natalie Hutchins](#) has already announced her retirement and left cabinet in December. But her portfolios were redistributed among existing ministers, and her cabinet position is yet to be filled.

Other names floated for retirement are Finance Minister [Danny Pearson](#), Water Minister Gayle Tierney and Health Minister [Mary-Anne Thomas](#).

Pearson and Tierney have previously denied their intention to resign when asked. However, this has not dimmed speculation that they will not contest the upcoming election.

On Thursday, Thomas said there had been a “lot of speculation” but did not answer directly whether she would contest her seat in November.

“My focus is on continuing to deliver each and every day as minister for health and for the people of my electorate,” she said.

“I’m very focused on the work that I have to do as health minister and representing the good people of Macedon.”

Further resignations have been expected since December, when Hutchins announced her retirement, because of Allan’s decision not to immediately elevate another MP into the ministry.

At the time, Labor MPs said Allan was waiting for further resignations to trigger a larger reshuffle.

Backbench MPs have spent the last week ringing around to shore up support for a promotion.

Among those being floated for a promotion are Eureka MP Michaela Settle, Frankston MP Paul Edbrooke, Mordialloc MP Tim Richardson and Kororoit MP Luba Grigorovitch. The announcement will provide Allan with the opportunity to spruik a new-look leadership team as she unveils a pre-election budget and asks Victorians to elect Labor for a fourth consecutive term, an achievement yet to be accomplished by the party in the state.

Since returning from the summer break, Allan has repeatedly sought to redefine her government by promising “new solutions” despite Labor having held power in Victoria for the past 12 years.

It also provides an opportunity for the premier to quell leadership rumblings that upended the parliamentary sitting weeks in March.

A small group of MPs were allegedly discussing a pathway to remove Allan as premier, citing her unfavourability in opinion polls as a drag on Labor's vote.

At the time, she dismissed the speculation as a "a few scallywags out there who might need a bit of a cuddle", and these discussions have quietened down since.

A cabinet reshuffle will allow Allan to reward loyalists or bring disaffected MPs back into her circle.

If not handled correctly, it could also further alienate those who have been voicing their frustrations behind closed doors.

A reshuffle by then-opposition leader Brad Battin in October ended up contributing to his downfall, enraging enough people to build a coalition of Liberal MPs who supported replacing him.

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