

The Advocate

Barnett's name thrown into health ministry hat

By SEAN FORD March 20, 2014, 8 a.m.

FORMER senator Guy Barnett may be a surprise choice as health minister in the new Hodgman Liberal government.

Deputy Leader Jeremy Rockliff faces a huge workload if he keeps the health portfolio he held in opposition, plus primary industries and workplace relations.

Particularly so given the demands of health and that the Liberals will have a major focus on growing the agricultural sector.

The Liberals will have an estimated 13 potential ministers among 16 or 17 MPs in the new parliament, across both houses.

The outgoing Labor-Green government had nine before the sacking of the two Greens, leading to massive workloads for several.

Mr Rockliff is a lock for primary industries, but may volunteer or be asked to give up health.

Mr Barnett is passionate about health and has expertise gained in and outside the former Howard federal government.

Mr Hodgman yesterday would not be drawn on who would get what, saying ministries were being decided and would be announced once seats were officially finalised. He hinted at an expanded team compared to the last government.

"I'm very confident the next Tasmanian government will have a tremendous array of skills, attributes and experience to deliver our plan."

Other new MHAs who may come in as ministers are Paul Harriss and (if elected) Roger Jaensch, while Adam Brooks may get expanded responsibilities.

Asked about the workload of some Labor ministers, Mr Hodgman said he did not believe it had been too much of a workload; rather, they had failed to cope.

"I'm confident my team will."

The Liberals may axe the climate change ministry.

"It's one of those matters in active consideration," Mr Hodgman said.

"I do propose to dispense with anything that doesn't deliver good outcomes for Tasmanians and where there's inefficiency in government we will cut waste."

Mr Barnett declined to comment on a possible ministry.

He said he was rejuvenated after nearly three years out of the Senate.

"I'm looking forward to contributing as a team member in the majority Liberal government."

Mr Hodgman will keep tourism.

See the online story [here](#).