

# Why CFMEU Victorian administrator Grahame McCulloch abruptly resigned

After just weeks in the job, allegations Grahame McCulloch had acted inappropriately towards female staff surfaced, prompting the CFMEU administrator to deliver him an ultimatum.

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Grahame McCulloch was appointed only last month to run the Victorian CFMEU branch. Picture: Stuart McEvoy/The Australian.

Grahame McCulloch, the former academics' union leader appointed just weeks ago to take over the Victorian CFMEU, has abruptly resigned following allegations he acted inappropriately towards female administrative staff.

Mr McCulloch, a former communist, was appointed only last month to run the branch after the [Albanese Government passed laws placing the union's construction divisions into administration](#).

Multiple sources told The Australian that CFMEU administrator Mark Irving, KC, told Mr McCulloch on Thursday afternoon that his employment would be terminated if he did not resign. He resigned hours later.

Disgraced former CFMEU boss John Setka attended a worksite rally in Melbourne to lambast Prime Minister Anthony Albanese.

Sources said staff employed by Mr Irving swung into action after Electrical Trades Union Victorian secretary Troy Gray made comments about Mr McCulloch during an address to a closed door meeting of 800 building union delegates at Moonee Valley racecourse on Thursday morning.

Referring to Mr McCulloch's appointment, Mr Gray quipped that Mr McCulloch must be "one of only nine Communists left in Australia".

“He’s got a little red book in one hand and a little red wine in the other,” Mr Gray said, before questioning Mr McCulloch’s alleged conduct toward administrative staff.

After being alerted to Mr Gray’s comments, staff for Mr Irving made inquiries about the claims, including speaking to employees.

Multiple sources alleged Mr McCulloch had made a “litany of suggestive comments” to female staff in the weeks he was in the job.

It is understood no formal written complaint was made by staff against Mr McCulloch.

Comment has been sought from Mr McCulloch but he did not return calls on Friday.

The Australian is not suggesting Mr McCulloch engaged in any wrongdoing only that the allegations were made and that he resigned after being told by Mr Irving he would be terminated.

A spokeswoman for Mr Irving confirmed on Friday that Mr McCulloch resigned late on Thursday from his position running the branch led for years by former state secretary John Setka

The spokeswoman declined to answer further questions about the reasons for his departure.

The sudden exit of Mr McCulloch, who was the general secretary of the National Tertiary Education Union for 25 years until 2018, is a setback for the Albanese Government as it seeks to clean up the CFMEU.

Left-wing unions sympathetic to the CFMEU have called a second protest rally in Victoria for next Wednesday and committed more than [\\$1m towards a High Court challenge](#) to try and overturn the administration.

Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus last month appointed Mr Irving to run the CFMEU nationally, resulting in the removal of senior CFMEU construction division officials, including NSW secretary Darren Greenfield.

Workplace Relations Minister Murray Watt on Thursday attacked the NSW CFMEU for transferring \$3.15m of union members’ funds to pay for lawyers for Mr Greenfield and his son Michael to fight bribery charges, declaring the move “stinks to high heaven”.