

Prime Minister Scott Morrison rewards conservative Libs in new roles

Andrew Bolt, Herald Sun
August 26, 2018 7:05pm

SCOTT Morrison is much smarter politically than the last prime minister. His new team of ministers is not just stronger, but likely to unite a party in pieces.

Yes, Morrison on Sunday sacked, snubbed or cut down to size key conservative rivals. He refused to promote former prime minister Tony Abbott and stripped his rival, Home Affairs Minister Peter Dutton, of responsibility for immigration.

Conservative powerbroker Michael Sukkar was sacked as assistant Treasurer.

CAN SCOTT MORRISON END LIBS' CIVIL WAR?

BOLT: SELFISH TURNBULL PLOTS TO DESTROY LIBERAL PARTY

BOLT: LIBERAL WOMEN NEED TO SPEAK UP ON LEADERSHIP



Scott Morrison is much smarter politically than the last prime minister, writes Andrew Bolt. Picture: Supplied.

But Morrison's masterstroke was to promote other conservatives, all team players, to fix exactly the issues Abbott and Dutton had campaigned on. Catholic Dan Tehan is now Education Minister, to fix the damaging brawl with

Catholic schools that the Left's Simon Birmingham caused with his botched new funding scheme.

Angus Taylor, a new-generation conservative, has been made Energy Minister, or as Morrison said, the "minister for reducing electricity prices". No mention of cutting emissions.

And Alan Tudge, who backed Dutton, was promoted to Cities, Urban Infrastructure and Population Minister — "the minister for congestion-busting".

If Abbott now has a problem with any of those issues, he'll be fighting conservatives.

In fact, conservatives now hold all the key portfolios of a government that needs to set a new direction — and seems sure now to tack more towards the Liberal base.

Morrison, once demonised as an arch-conservative, has Josh Frydenberg as his Treasurer and has kept Mathias Cormann as Finance Minister, despite Cormann's support for Dutton, who stays in Home Affairs.



Morrison has Josh Frydenberg as his Treasurer. Picture: File.

Weak performers of the Left have not been upset by dismissals but have been shuffled to areas not crucial to an election campaign. Marise Payne, nearly invisible as Defence Minister, is Foreign Minister, replacing Julie Bishop, who helpfully resigned.

The far more media-friendly Christopher Pyne replaces her.

Birmingham goes to Trade, and Kelly O'Dwyer is out of Small Business, where she alienated so many.

Sure, Morrison has rewarded allies such as Stuart Robert and Alex Hawke.

But ex-Nationals leader Barnaby Joyce got a small olive branch, being made "envoy" on drought assistance, and Morrison put the ball in Abbott's court by saying he could get a similar honorary "envoy" job if he chose.

It's clever. The PM has divided and conquered the conservatives, yet put them in charge of issues that matter to them and on which he could still win an election.