

NSW Governor David Hurley will be Australia's new Governor-General

Written by Michelle Grattan, Professorial Fellow, University of Canberra

Scott Morrison has announced that New South Wales Governor David Hurley will become Australia's next Governor-General, succeeding Sir Peter Cosgrove.

The Prime Minister timed his news conference in Canberra with the governor-general designate to coincide with Bill Shorten's opening address at the ALP national conference in Adelaide.

Like Cosgrove, Hurley is a former military man. He has been NSW Governor since 2014 and served as chief of the Australian Defence Force from 2011-2014.

He will be regarded as a safe and uncontroversial choice, although some critics will say the government should have looked beyond former military ranks.

Labor frontbencher Jim Chalmers said the opposition welcomed Hurley's appointment but was disappointed that Shorten had not been consulted. The opposition leader was only informed on Sunday morning, ahead of the 10am announcement.

"Ideally, so close to an election the opposition would have been properly consulted on an appointment which is so important to Australia and goes for such a long time" Chalmers said.

Morrison said Hurley would be sworn in on June 28, to allow him to fulfil his present duties. Cosgrove's term, which ends in March, will be briefly extended.

Morrison in a statement said Hurley had been "a very popular governor of NSW. From his weekly boxing workouts with Indigenous children as part of the Tribal Warriors Program, to his frequent regional trips, Governor Hurley is known as being generous and approachable to young and old alike."

Appearing at their joint news conference in the prime ministerial courtyard, Morrison said of

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General Hurley “I had only one choice, my first choice, and he is standing next to me,”

Asked why the announcement was made on Sunday, Morrison said “it needed to be done to provide certainty about the role going into next year”

“Next year is an election year and it is very important that ... this appointment is seen well outside the context of any electoral issues.”

The start of Shorten’s national conference speech was disrupted when demonstrators, protesting about the Adani mine and refugee policy, mounted the stage. An anti-Adani protestor stood beside Shorten with a flag that said “Stop Adani”, and other protestors unfurled a banner “ALP - Stop playing politics with peoples lives. #ClosetheCamps”.

An obviously frustrated Shorten said people had the right to protest but “you have got to ask yourself when you see these protests, who is the winner? It is the Coalition”.

Security guards escorted and dragged the protesters off the stage.

In his speech, Shorten said a Labor government would be the first government in Australian history with 50% of women in its parliamentary ranks. Standing in front of the conference’s theme of “A Fair Go for Australia” Shorten said “inequality is eating away at our prosperity”.

He announced that an ALP government would make superannuation part of the national employment standards, saying it was a workplace right and that bosses who stole superannuation from their employees should suffer the same penalties as others who violated workplace rights.

He stressed that Labor’s plans were fully costed and a Labor government could “guarantee stronger budget surpluses”.

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Michelle Grattan does not work for, consult, own shares in or receive funding from any company or organisation that would benefit from this article, and has disclosed no relevant affiliations beyond their academic appointment.

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