

National Andrew Broad forced to quit frontbench amid 'sugar baby' allegation

Written by Michelle Grattan, Professorial Fellow, University of Canberra

Victorian Nationals MP Andrew Broad has been forced to quit as assistant minister to Deputy Michael McCormack after extraordinary claims about his exchanges with a young woman he met through a “seeking arrangement” website and dined with in Hong Kong.

The magazine New Idea [reported](#) sensational details from an interview with the woman, Amy, who uses the online alias “Sweet Sophia Rose”.

In a statement to New Idea, Broad said: “I have been advised that the person making the allegation may have engaged in criminal activity. This matter has been reported to the Australian Federal Police and I will not be making any further comment.”

According to the report, Amy said that after a period of messaging between the two, things went sour when they met at a swish Hong Kong restaurant for dinner.

She said “He kept commenting on prices and how expensive they were. It made everything so awkward from the start. He told me he was in Hong Kong for a conference but he shouldn’t have been here at all.

“He kept saying that he was very important and that when he left he was going to have to throw away his phone. He referred to himself as James Bond numerous times.

“He gave me his election speech as to why he should be voted in by the public and I stopped listening because he was so arrogant.

“He kept grabbing my hand and putting it on his leg, so I excused myself and went to the bathroom and when I came back I told him I was leaving.”

In a statement on Monday, McCormack said that “due to the nature of the allegations made, it is

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appropriate for Mr Broad to resign as assistant minister to the deputy prime minister.”

The Nationals leader stressed that “the matter may also be subject to further investigation”.

“Mr Broad will continue as an effective and hard working member for Mallee, a role he has capably held since 2013.” Mallee in northern Victoria is a safe Nationals seat.

Later, at a news conference, McCormack, asked whether he would advise Broad to stay in his seat, said this was “hypothetical”. He said on his advice and direction Broad had referred the matter to the Australian Federal Police, “so let’s see what the investigations uncover ... I do not want to say anything that might impede those investigations at this point”.

McCormack said he had been told of the matter “a couple of weeks ago”.

Amy, almost two decades younger than Broad who is 43, was quoted in New Idea as claiming he was not fit to represent Australia.

Broad had allegedly described himself as: “I’m an Aussie lad, I know how to ride a horse, fly a plane and f–k my woman. My intentions are completely dishonourable.”

“When he first messaged I checked his profile and it said he was 36 years old and from Australia. Other men that message appeared to be a lot older, so I thought I would see what he was like, and at first, the conversation was really normal. He would tell me about his weekend and going to the cinema,” Amy said.

According to Amy, they had been speaking through text messages for more than a month before they met at the Aqua restaurant in Hong Kong.

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Amy said after she told him she was leaving the restaurant she later received a text message that thanked her for dinner and then she decided to block him.

“He led me to believe he was younger and he wasn’t pleasant to be around. I know some people wouldn’t understand the premise of the site but in a lot of cases like mine, it’s simply dinner and a chat, and that’s not what he was looking for.”

During the controversy over Barnaby Joyce’s affair with his former staffer, Broad called for him to stand down as party leader.

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

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