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EXCLUSIVE

Deputy Commissioner Mick Willing to leave NSW Police Force

A week before being officially sworn in as NSW Police Commissioner, it can be revealed Karen Webb terminated the services of her deputy Michael Willing.



Mark Morri

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A week before being officially sworn in as NSW Police Commissioner, Karen Webb has terminated the services of Deputy Commissioner Michael Willing, who was tipped to get the job ahead of her.

The sudden departure of Mr Willing has come just days after Mick Fuller left the job — handing over the reins to Ms Webb — and has sent shockwaves through the organisation.

The Daily Telegraph understands Ms Webb rang Mr Willing earlier this week while he was on holidays and said he was not part of her five year-plan and that his services were not required.

“I wish to advise Deputy Commissioner Michael Willing APM served his last day with the New South Wales Police Force, Wednesday 19 January 2022. I'd like to take this opportunity to wish Mick and his family all the best in their future endeavours, and thank him for his service,” she said in a statement released today.

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Deputy Commissioner Mick Willing to leave NSW Police Force | Daily Telegraph

An internal email was sent around to senior police at 11am.



Assistant Commissioner Mick Willing has been stood down. Picture: Richard Dobson

No reason was given but it's understood Willing is being blamed for allegedly leaking a story about the other contender for the top job, Deputy Mal Lanyon, being aggressive towards ambulance officers after he was found on the lawn near the Big Merino in Goulburn.

Mr Willing has steadfastly and repeatedly said he had nothing to do with the story coming out. He has been unavailable for comment.

"It sends a pretty strong message, and proves she is not afraid to make tough decisions," a senior officer said.

Senior government sources said the decision was signed off on by newly appointed Police Minister Paul Toole and has upset many National MPs.

"Willing was very popular with a lot of the nationals and some of them are not happy at all," the senior officer said.

A 31-year-veteran and former boss of the Homicide and Counter terrorism squad was the preferred candidate by a selection committee which recommended him to then Premier Gladys Berejiklian.

She then suddenly resigned and Premier Dominic Perrottet interviewed the three candidates and selected Ms Webb to become the states first female Police Commissioner.



Incoming NSW Police Commissioner Karen Webb Picture: NCA NewsWire /Gaye Gerard

18/09/2023, 15:48

Deputy Commissioner Mick Willing to leave NSW Police Force | Daily Telegraph

Her next task will be to select the now two vacant deputy spots after Willings departure and her promotion.

“The front runner for one spot is Leanne McCusker, who is acting in her old job now ,” a senior officer said.

“But there are others who have filled in as deputies in the past year or so who would all be chances,” he said.

Among those considered to be in the running out of the 19 assistant commissioners are Mark Walton, Peter Thurtell, Mick Fitzgerald, Gelina Talbot, Joe Cassar, Stacey Maloney, Scott Whyte and Scott Cook.

Plenty of insiders say gender is not an issue with the new boss, nor does she have a “faction” which until recently was a large part of the police culture which dictated who was “in or out” of favour.

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