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Minister could get the arts

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A STATE government front-bencher today faces being the first minister kicked out of the NSW Parliament in almost two decades over an embarrassing constitutional show-down.

Arts Minister Don Harwin this morning could be booted from the upper house after a member of his own Liberal Party crossed the floor against him last night.

Mr Harwin has been ordered to hand over key internal government documents by 9.30am today after the government lost an ALP censure motion by 21 votes to 20.

The state government has previously failed to comply with calls for the reports. A coalition of the ALP, minor parties and maverick Liberal MP Matthew Mason-Cox joined forces to censure the government for not producing business cases for the move of the Powerhouse Museum, its business case on its stadium policy and a child protection report.

Under parliamentary rules — last invoked when Carr government minister Michael Egan was suspended in 1999 — Mr Harwin would be barred from Parliament for three days, or be forced to go to the Supreme Court. Mr Mason-Cox told Parliament last night refusing access to the reports “interferes with the capacity of the House to fulfil its role”.



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