



# Carr's top two advisers resign

By **BEN ENGLISH**

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**TWO** of Premier Bob Carr's most trusted political advisers resigned abruptly yesterday.

After nine years helping hoist their leader from the political wilderness to government, chief of staff Bruce Hawker and senior adviser David Britton resigned to form their own company.

Both denied their exits were the result of a falling out with Mr Carr.

But they bring to five the number of Mr Carr's advisers who have left in the past year.

Senior Government sources last night conceded the departures were a great loss to the Premier.

"There is an enormous gap created and extraordinary corporate memory lost," said one.

"They will be missed."

Mr Carr denied the departures had ruptured his support system.

"There is no hole in the office," he told *The Daily Telegraph*.

"It is very hard to hold staff as long as I have held them — political staff traditionally have a short life-expectancy.

"I have been exceptionally lucky."

Mr Carr said both men had departed on good terms with him, saying he would be happy to hire them in their new guise as political consultants.

Mr Britton, 41, who earned an heroic reputation within the ALP for his ability to mount successful campaigns in marginal electorates, said

the timing was right for him to leave.

"I've been working this way, seven days a week for nine years and I felt like a change — I have a family to think of."

For Mr Hawker, 40, his resignation ends a 15-year career in the parliamentary Labor Party that has spanned the Wran and Unsworth Governments, the despair of Opposition when Nick Greiner's Coalition swept to power in 1988 and Bob Carr's triumph two years ago.

Both men have been long-time members of the Labor Party and said they intended to use their extensive networks to build their new business.

Mr Carr's media director, Kris Neill, will replace Mr Hawker as chief of staff, with policy chief Rob Griggs being promoted to her deputy.

The departures mean Ms Neill, Mr Griggs and Mr Carr's economics adviser Steve Lyndon are the only survivors from the beginning of his dark days in Opposition.

Graeme Wedderburn, another long-time confidant of the Premier left last November.

He was preceded by Ken Baxter — the former Premier's Department director-general who Mr Carr sacked after luring him from Victoria to undertake his toughest reforms — and Ken Cripps, Mr Carr's long-term friend and former Public Employment Office chief who was sacked in controversial circumstances last year.