

# Minister Mick de Brenni's chief-of-staff quits after barney with boss

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A TOP adviser to a Queensland Government minister quit immediately after a heated argument with his boss last month – and he never looked back.

**Anthony Templeton and** EXCLUSIVE

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**The Sunday Mail (Qld)**

A TOP adviser to a Queensland Government minister left the role immediately after a heated altercation with his boss at the Labor state conference last month.

Housing Minister Mick de Brenni's chief-of-staff, Matt Lawrence, left the office and didn't return after the argument at a Left-faction function during the Gold Coast conference.

Mr de Brenni strongly denied there was a fight and characterised the incident as a "disagreement".

 "There was no physical altercation," he said. "But I think it would be pretty rare to find a political office where there (aren't) disagreements of opinion on a range of issues around policy decisions, campaign decisions and diary decisions.

"I think the intrigue around this has been overstated."

Mr Lawrence has returned to a senior campaigning role with the powerful United Voice union which helped get Mr de Brenni and six other Labor MPs elected.

Mr de Brenni said it was not unusual for him and Mr Lawrence to have disagreements during their time working together.

"We have robust discussions all the time," he said.

The minister confirmed that Mr Lawrence did not return to the office after the conference but said it was not unusual for people to request leave between positions.

“I think it is a pretty ordinary course of action when people take a bit of leave between one high-pressure job and another one,” he said.

“He’s worked bloody hard, like everyone in government offices do.”

Mr de Brenni also said Mr Lawrence’s position was always designed to be temporary to help set up the office before finding a permanent chief of staff.

“I had always talked with Matt about joining my office for about six months so it (the move) was well overdue,” he said.

*The Sunday-Mail* tried to contact Mr Lawrence through United Voice but he did not respond.